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THE ACTOR'S WIFE.

A *Nobel*.

BY
EDMUND LEATHES,
ACTOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.




London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY & CO.,
31, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1880.

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251. f. 640.

driving rain pelted against the poor little windows as if determined to make its way through them into the cosy little parlour where Gertrude Totter was getting tea ready, and making preparations for the reception of her father, whom she expected every minute, on his return from his daily toils as a City clerk.

Gertrude Totter was a pretty girl of sixteen ; not a beauty—her eyes were dark, and full of expression ; her hair was golden brown, the dense masses of which were neatly moulded into a natural knob at the back of her head. Gertrude disdained frisettes, chignons, and the like atrocities ; her greatest charm was her smile, which lit up her whole face, and then indeed she approached the beautiful. Her life had hitherto been by no means a bed of roses ; her mother died when she was nine years old, and, having no relation in the world, that she knew of, except her father, she was brought up under the guidance



of that irritable gentleman and her kind-hearted old nurse, Mrs. Runt, who, at the time of the death of Gertrude's mother, was a widow. Gertrude was sent to a cheap boarding-school, where it was a wonder she never lost her innate grace of nature and naturally-refined manners amongst the vulgarity of her mistress and companions.

Mrs. Bulger was in the habit of assuring Mr. Totter that his daughter was a *real* lady, and took entirely after her mother. The gentleman heeded not the implied sneer. Gertrude's father had been, since boyhood, a City clerk; his salary had never exceeded the magnificent sum of two hundred pounds a year. The smallness of his income was entirely owing to himself: he was always a quarrelsome, irritable man, and had never made a friend in his life. He had married the orphan daughter of an ex-commander in the navy, and his wife brought with her a dowry of two thousand pounds. No settlement having

been made, Mr. Totter quickly squandered the ready money in dabbling in the money-market, and in idiotic speculations in the hope of making a fortune in a month.

When Gertrude was but fifteen years old, Mrs. Runt's kind heart could no longer remain in its empty condition, so she bestowed it and her plump hand upon a very well-to-do cat's-meat merchant, who contracted for the feeding of half the feline population of Belgravia and Westbournia. His name was Mr. Bulger. Up to the time of her engagement, Mrs. Runt had kept house for Mr. Totter, and not only gave him his dinners, which he relished very much, but often a piece of her mind, which he did not relish at all. So, when Mrs. Runt informed Mr. Totter, one morning, that she was about to enter once more into the holy bonds, Mr. Totter loudly proclaimed his joy at getting rid of her: whereupon there ensued a mighty war of words, and when Mr. Totter returned from

the City in the evening the house was empty and no tea prepared for him.

Gertrude was hastily summoned from school, and from that date to the opening of this story she had kept house for her father.

Poor Gertrude's sole friend and companion was the kind-hearted wife of the cats'-meat merchant, a stout matron of fifty, whose heart was perpetually breaking at the unruly conduct of two grown-up sons, one of whom was in the army, and the other was learning the trade of his stepfather.

The half of the detached cottage corresponding to "Miranda Lodge" was "Bellerophon Villa," occupied by a not very respectable old lady named Mrs. Rorman, a widow. By her first husband, a Mr. Giles, Mrs. Rorman had a son, who was now about forty years of age, and captain of a merchant vessel; her second husband, Mr. Rorman, was a widower, and brought with him, to his second wife's care, a son named Richard.

These stepbrothers were about as bad "lots," to use an appropriate slang term in describing them, as were ever left to solace a lone widow. Captain Giles was constantly at sea, but his stepbrother, Dick Rorman, was always at home ; and how he lived, and how he passed his time, was a mystery to everyone. These two men were nearly the only acquaintances that Mr. Totter received at his house ; and when Gertrude returned from school, and either one or both came in to spend the evening over grog with her father, their language and coarse jests always banished her from the room, in spite of her father's repeated orders for her to remain.

At the opening of the chapter, Gertrude Totter was described as preparing tea for her father. Mrs. Bulger had just "popped in" to see her "dear child" and have a chat, and had just "popped out" again ; and as she did so, she nearly ran over a little miserable-looking man who was entering the wicket-gate in

front of Miranda Lodge, as, in the dark, the portly form of Mrs. Bulger was about to pass through it. She was going to put up her umbrella, the point of which she accidentally thrust into the pit of the stomach of the approaching little old gentleman, who was no other than Mr. Totter.

As soon as he could find breath he growled :

“D—— the woman ! What do you want here ? I told you I would not have you in my house, and I won’t ! Do you hear ?”

Mrs. Bulger feared him not, and quietly replied that she should please herself about coming or staying away, and that, in her opinion, he was a very bad old man ; and, having put up her umbrella, which was very large, she was caught by a gust of wind and blown away at a trot.

In a worse humour than usual, Mr. Totter entered his cottage and went into the parlour, where he took off his drenched coat and threw

it to his daughter, telling her to take it into the kitchen to dry it. She was used to such treatment, and obeyed. She quickly returned with the tea and a dish of deliciously odorous stew, which she had herself made for her father's evening meal.

Seeing how wet he was, she begged him to change his clothes before he sat down, to which he growled out a negative, and asked her "What the blank she wanted that infernal cat's-meat woman about the place for?"

He would not sit at the table, but crouched over the fire. He drank his tea, but would eat nothing. Again Gertrude besought him to change his wet clothes; he told her to hold her noise and get the whisky bottle. She did so, and got him some hot water; she hoped the spirit would bring some warmth to his body, if not to his heart; she could see that he was ill.

He sat in front of the fire drinking tumbler after tumbler of spirits and water, and his

wet clothes steamed as they dried upon his body; he was moody and silent, and scarcely a word passed his lips. In spite of the liquor and the fire he constantly shivered, and Gertrude became alarmed; but she knew it was no use talking to him. Presently he told her to go upstairs and warm his bed with the warming-pan, and light a fire in his bedroom, as he said he could get no heat downstairs. This she did, and presently, with rather uncertain steps, he went upstairs to his bed.

Gertrude, in great alarm, wrote off to Mrs. Bulger, telling her of her father's state, and begging her to come to her as soon as she received the letter in the morning; and, throwing her waterproof over her, she hurried to the corner of the street to the pillar-post.

The next morning she went to her father's room and found him dreadfully ill. He tried to rise, but was in far too great pain to stand. He ordered her to send to the office to let them know he was too ill to come that day,

but said he should be well on the morrow. "No, he would have no doctor, he was the best doctor himself; he had caught a slight cold and knew very well how to get rid of it,"—and he told her to bring up the spirits, which, with hot water, he constantly imbibed all day. The result was, fever set in, and the next morning Gertrude and Mrs. Bulger sent for a doctor.

A sharp attack of rheumatic fever set in, and the old man raved in his delirium and recognised neither Mrs. Bulger nor his poor daughter, who devotedly attended to and nursed him. He grew worse, and his sufferings were dreadful. At last the doctor gave hopes, and gradually, inch by inch, as it were, the sufferer crept back to life. But to what a life! Crippled and deformed—his means of livelihood were taken from him—his crippled hand would never again hold a pen.

Scarcely had he gathered sufficient strength after his illness to crawl downstairs to the

parlour, when a letter arrived from the City firm in whose service he had been a clerk, politely informing him those services would no longer be required, and generously enclosing him a cheque for one hundred pounds, at the same time sympathising with him in his misfortune.

Far from softening his heart, his illness had left old Totter more querulous and irritable than ever, and poor Gertrude's life began to be a burden to her.

The Totters were in no immediate want, for the old man's miserly instincts had induced him, quarter by quarter, to save something out of his salary. Moreover, the only wise thing he had ever done in his life was to buy the lease of Miranda Lodge out of a portion of his late wife's dower, before the rest of it had been swallowed up in the vortex of speculation. Thus, though the future looked rather black for them, they needed to fear no trouble for the present.

Gertrude consulted with Mrs. Bulger, and after a battle royal with old Totter, they extracted from him sufficient money to buy a sewing-machine, with the assistance of which Gertrude gradually, by patiently seeking for work, added to the slender income of the family.

Old Totter vainly sought to forbid the house to Mrs. Bulger, but the good lady refused to take hints or listen to commands, and Gertrude's only friend stuck still closer to her in her misfortunes. During the illness and convalescence, the next-door neighbours had been constant in their inquiries and offers of assistance, and, on one occasion, Mrs. Rorman, who, sad to say, was an habitual toper, sobered herself sufficiently to make a call of condolence on poor Gertrude, who, in the midst of the worries and anxieties caused by her father's illness, wished that elderly gin-drinking sympathiser a hundred miles away.

Evidently the visit of condolence had been planned by the artful son, Dick Rorman, who

for some time previous to Totter's illness, had covertly pestered Gertrude with his attentions. After sitting ladling out such sympathy as her dram-soddened brain could collect, Mrs. Rorman came to the pith of what she had to say :

“ All flesh is grass, my dear ; and some day we must go the way of all flesh ; and if it is decreed that your dad upstairs is to die, die he will, and that is sure, and you'll be left a horphan. So, my gal, let me recommend you to turn your weather-hey, as Jim the captain would say, towards my boy Dick. He might do better, but he's set his 'eart on 'aving you, and as you'll be all alone in the world, you'd better take 'im. There, there, you needn't answer now, but think over it. And now, my dear, as I feel the palpitations coming on again that bad, get me just the least that is in a wine-glass, or, if that's not handy, a tumbler will do as well, and I'll be off to cook my Dick's dinner.”

Gertrude, smothering her disgust, obtained her the drink, and, in thankfulness, closed the door on her.

From this date the fulsome attentions of Mr. Dick Rorman added greatly to poor Gertrude's list of troubles.

This Mr. Dick Rorman was a man of about thirty-five years of age, of most forbidding countenance, retreating eyes, very black hair, and bushy black eyebrows; lips full and sensual; strongly-built, with a short bull-neck. It would be difficult to describe the appearance of his face, for it was constantly changing: sometimes he indulged in a moustache worthy of a dragoon; at other times his face was as sleek as a Methodist parson's, and occasionally he grew a stubbly black beard. Nobody knew how he lived, and sometimes he was away from his step-mother's house for weeks, no one knew where.

At last, about six months after old Totter's illness, Mr. Rorman, in scarlet neck-tie and

brown velveten coat, appeared one evening in the parlour of Miranda Lodge, and, after fortifying himself with copious draughts from the demijohn of whisky which he had brought as a present to the crippled old gentleman, thus delivered himself:

“You see, Mr. Totter, my business is my business, and no affair of anybody else’s; but I’ve got coin enough for myself and somebody besides. Now I want to marry Miss Gertrude; she’s cold enough to me herself, but if you just spoke the word I think she’d take me. There’s a home for her and you for the taking.”

Old Totter thanked him, and promised to do his best for him; and the next day, on breaking the subject to his daughter, was met with a decided and abrupt refusal, which was duly repeated to the love-sick Richard, in spite of which he persevered in his attentions.

At about this time Mrs. Rorman’s own son returned from sea.

Captain James Giles, of the good ship *Camperdaisy*, was a man well to do as the world goes : he was part owner of the ship of which he was captain. In personal appearance he was no more beautiful than his stepbrother : his hair was red, as were his beard and moustache. Unfortunately for Gertrude, this carrotty-haired, hirsute sea-rover was also smitten with her charms ; and almost daily, while the poor girl was industriously working at her sewing-machine, her marine lover came to call and sit and stare at her with a sort of animal wonder and longing.

This rivalry between the two stepbrothers did not seem to cause much enmity ; in fact, it afterwards came out that they tossed up heads or tails which should go in for her, and Rorman lost.

Often, when Gertrude was taking her work home to her employers, the wily captain would follow her and overtake her, as if quite by

accident, and escort her to her journey's end, and then to her own home.

Of course, old Totter very quickly saw the state of affairs, and constantly urged his daughter to give encouragement to the well-to-do ship captain. The old gentleman had never pressed her to accept the attentions of Dick Rorman, but when comfort and independence could be procured for him for life, simply at the price of his daughter's hand, day and night he besought Gertrude to look upon Jim Giles with favouring eye.

At last the captain received orders to start on a new voyage. The night before he was to sail, he called once more at Miranda Lodge, and besought a private interview with Miss Totter. He obtained it, and in a quarter of an hour left the house without even seeing the old gentleman.

Old Totter limped into the parlour as fast as he could, his face gleaming with anger and

disappointment. He found Gertrude sitting at her sewing-machine.

“What does this mean?” cried he. “Can you have the audacity to tell me you have refused the man, you—you—pauper, you ingrate! And I, your poor old crippled father, starving to keep you alive, you shameless, graceless baggage.”

“I could not; oh, father, I could not!” cried Gertrude.

“You couldn’t, couldn’t you, my fine lass! And now he’s gone on a voyage to Melbourne, and it’ll be a good year before we set eyes on him again; and may be dead or in the work-house before then; and a lot you care, you—you—get out of the house, you cat—you Jezebel!” the old man shrieked. “I’ve a great mind to—yes, by ——, I will, too!”

And the tottering old man raised his stick to strike her. With a scream she avoided him, and flew to her own room and locked herself in.

For a week old Totter never spoke to his daughter. Occasionally he would put on his hat and crawl out of the house on his crutch, and remain away from home some hours. At night, save when Dick Rorman came in, his sole companion was the whisky bottle.

Months passed away. Dick Rorman persisted in his attentions to Gertrude, when, suddenly, he disappeared for six months, and when he returned, his shaven face and cropped head would have revealed a shocking scandal to anyone but so innocent a girl as poor Gertrude. As for old Totter, Rorman was so fond of constantly changing his personal appearance, the crippled old rascal scarcely noticed any difference. Dick's story was that he had been to Ireland on business.

By dint of constantly working at her sewing-machine, Gertrude had been able, hitherto, to meet the humble expenses of the house without asking her father for anything out of his store of savings.

Ten months had passed since Captain Giles had sailed for Melbourne. During that time Gertrude had received two letters from him, full of ill-spelt devotion. Old Totter, so both Gertrude and Mrs. Bulger in consultation came to the conclusion, appeared to be growing more and more morose and unsettled; day after day he went out in the morning, not returning till night.

Once, on his return later than usual, he entered the parlour where Gertrude was sitting as usual, at work; she noticed his appearance seemed very strange.

Commencing with an oath, he proceeded to say :

“ Jim Giles will be home in a month. Now, my fine lady, be ready to marry him in six weeks, or pack up, and out of this we go. I to the workhouse, and you to h——, or where you please. I have lost every farthing I ever had; unless you choose to marry Giles and make him pay off the mortgage on this cottage,

that goes from us too. Think this over, my fine lass."

And before she could speak he had taken up the whisky bottle and toddled out of the room. Poor Gertrude was thunderstruck. Her first impulse was to rush out of the house, late though it was, to her old friend, Mrs. Bulger. However, she wrote to her, begging her to come the next morning without delay, and having posted the letter, retired to her room and wept herself into a fitful sleep.

It turned out that old Totter had been introduced to some friend of Mr. Dick Rorman's, and had been induced to embark his savings in some wonderful speculation "which was bound to make a decent fortune for both of them in a very short time." A hitch occurred, and all old Totter's ready money was gone; he was then induced to borrow money on his cottage of an honest Jew, a friend of his fellow speculator—at least, this was the story

Mr. Totter told ; but there was very little doubt the silly old man entered the trap so skilfully laid for him by Rorman and his accomplice to ruin him ; by these means the worthy Richard thought to apply the screw to Mr. Totter to force him to insist upon his daughter's marriage with himself.

Mrs. Bulger tried to solace her poor young friend. Gertrude's sewing-machine seemed suddenly to have hundredweights attached to the treadle ; her heart was indeed heavy, and her care for life seemed entirely gone, and now that the necessity for working was more urgent than ever, she seemed to lose the power to keep up to it.

Mrs. Bulger, with her kind heart full of grief for her young friend, advised her to sacrifice herself to save her father. She spoke of duty, or rather "dooty," and raked her memory to recite the fifth commandment.

"Remember," said she, "what the Scrip-

ture says ; ' Honour thy pa and ma, or you'll never live to be an old woman.' ”

The good-hearted soul saw nothing in Captain Giles that was against him in her opinion ; he was well off, and very fond of Gertrude. To be sure, he was rather fond of liquor, but, for that matter, so was her lord and master, the cat's-meat merchant, whom she considered quite a model husband, “ and, as you know, my dear, it ain't my first.”

Gradually poor Gertrude tried to reconcile herself to the sacrifice, and daily the merchant captain was expected home.

Old Totter had scarcely addressed his daughter since the night he had announced to her his utter ruin. One morning, however, while Gertrude was giving her father his breakfast, he said :

“ Well, have you decided ? Will you send me to the workhouse or keep me out ? ”

“ Father,” said Gertrude, “ I cannot bear the man. I would do anything for you, but

is this necessary? Let the house go, we can live in cheap lodgings, and can work still harder."

"Cheap lodgings, indeed! While I have a stubborn vixen of a disobedient daughter, who chooses to say no to her own advancement, and settle her poor crippled old father in comfort for life. I tell you what, you heartless baggage, I would sooner be in the workhouse twenty times than live in a garret on the miserable pittance you can bring in through that d——d infernal, everlasting noisy machine. So look you, accept Giles's hand, or if ever a father's curses can bring harm to a child, I'll do my best to make you suffer by them. So say no more, and never speak to me again till you are ready to obey me."

Captain Giles returned. The night before his arrival Rorman brought old Totter one hundred and fifty pounds as the price of his daughter's hand.

"This money is yours," said he, "the moment Gertrude consents to marry me."

Totter, now nearly certain of his daughter's acquiescence, temporized, and said he would give his answer in a fortnight.

Before the fortnight was over poor Gertrude had sold herself to James Giles, at her wretched father's command.

Sold herself? How many—hundreds and hundreds—are ready and even anxious to sell themselves, and never need a crippled father's command. Ah, poor Gertrude! it may seem a dreadful thing to your delicate, innocent nature to promise to marry a man you cannot love for the sake of his £ s. d. ; but I fear you will receive but little sympathy from the majority of your sex, for that which appears to you a bitter misfortune is, in their eyes, a heaven-sent piece of good luck, and a matter of sincere congratulation.

CHAPTER II.

"*Juliet*. Too early seen unknown, and known too late."

Romeo and Juliet, Act i.

OLD Totter retired to his own room with his whisky bottle one night, shortly after the return of James Giles, and turning on the staircase, growled out to his daughter :

"Giles will be here in the morning for his final answer."

Poor Gertrude's night was not one of rest and peaceful slumber. Weary of life, sad, and unrefreshed, she rose in the morning, and prepared her father's frugal breakfast. In silence the old man sipped his tea and munched his toast, and presently hobbled out of the room.

Left to herself, the poor girl braced herself up for the coming interview. As the neighbouring church-clock chimed the hour of eleven, Captain Giles opened the wicket-gate and knocked at the door of Miranda Lodge. He was admitted, and the two were face to face in the little parlour.

"Well," began Giles, without preliminary ceremony, "have you made up your mind, my girl? This is your last chance. I'm sick of dangling after you. Now say yes or no."

"Captain Giles," replied Gertrude, "I am grateful for your kindness, but——"

"Yes or no!" exclaimed Giles.

The word was whispered, and Gertrude was held in the rough embrace of her sailor lover.

"Say no more, my lass: the bargain's settled. I don't ask for your love and that nonsense yet: it'll come in time. It's enough you belong to me, and the sooner we're married the better, and get our honeymoon over before we go to sea."

Gertrude involuntarily shuddered at the prospect before her. Giles, mistaking the cause, said :

“ Oh, you'll soon get used to it ; you'll be comfortable enough ; but don't get too free with the passengers, male or female.”

And the sea captain rattled on, while poor Gertrude sat silent, with pale face and clasped hands, trying to smile at his rough jokes, and inwardly praying that she might do her duty by him as her husband, as she imagined she had done by her father.

“ And now good-bye, my dear. I must go into the City, but I shall be back to-night, and your dad and I must have a big drink over this business. I haven't seen Dick since I came back, or he'd join us. He's off doing no good somewhere, I'll bet. No more of that d——d sewing-machine now, my lass, though you'd better not send it away—it may be useful in about a year or so. Eh !—little frocks, etc., want neat sewing ?”

And with a laugh as coarse as his remark, he kissed his sweetheart, and was gone.

Gertrude, with crimson face and neck, threw herself into her father's arm-chair in a heart-breaking agony of tears, from which she was presently aroused by feeling herself clasped to the capacious breast of the warm-hearted Mrs. Bulger.

The wife of the West-end cats'-meat merchant was delighted at the prospect of Gertrude's marriage; and Gertrude herself having had her "good cry," bravely set to work to face the inevitable, and to prepare herself for her new and secretly-dreaded future.

Old Totter returned. Mrs. Bulger opened the door for him, and his muttered curse at seeing her was suddenly turned into a blessing at hearing her exclaim, "She's done it, Totter!" And the old man hobbled into the parlour, and kissed and whimpered over his daughter, calling her by all the pet names he

could think of, which were neither many nor choice.

The banns were put up, and preparations were made for the wedding, which was to take place in three weeks. Giles was certainly in love with Gertrude ; that is, as much in love as his nature would allow. He was hungry to possess her. His purse-strings were loose, and old Tötter had plenty of money wherewith to follow out the captain's directions as to preparations for the marriage.

The banquet was to take place in the little parlour of Miranda Lodge. Mr. and Mrs. Bulger were invited to the feast—the sole guests out of the family—and the eminent cat's-meat merchant sent back his “comps., and sorry I can't come.” His wife besought him to change his mind, but he could not overcome his inborn shyness ; at last, however, he said he'd look in in the evening, and have a glass after it was all over.

Dick Rorman was still away—no one knew

where, and nobody cared. Gertrude, having once made up her mind, no longer appeared to dread her coming sacrifice, and cut out and made her own wedding-dress—a present from the captain—silver-grey silk.

At last the day arrived. Very pretty did Gertrude look in her wedding-dress, with her flushed and blushing face, and her beautiful eyes larger and brighter than ever with excitement and her efforts to control her emotions. The little party—Mr. Totter, Gertrude, and Mrs. Bulger—walked over to the church, which was nearly opposite the house, surrounded by a mob of noisy brats and brat-maids, and they entered the church porch amid sundry remarks, such as, “Oh, ain’t she nice?” “The fat un’s ’er ma, I suppose!” “Lor’, what a hugly hold man!” and so on. The only remark which elicited a reply from Mrs. Bulger came from an ugly, cross-eyed maiden of about fifteen, with a squalling babe in her arms, who maliciously cried out, “Lor’, ain’t she old for a

bridesmaid!" upon which Mrs. Bulger turned sharply round, and, with great severity, replied, "Git along, ye cock-eyed 'ussey!"

Captain Giles was waiting at the altar rails, accompanied by an evidently seafaring gentleman, who turned out to be the first mate of the *Camperdaisy*, the captain's ship. All was ready, and the curate began, in droning voice, and almost unintelligible gabble, "Dearly beloved," and quickly came to "amazement;" and, having shaken hands with bride and bridegroom, and stereotypedly wished them joy, asked them to follow him to the vestry. The book was signed—old Totter taking about three minutes to make his signature legible with his crippled hand—and Gertrude and James Giles were man and wife, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, etc. Mrs. Bulger shed the necessary tear of sympathy, and the party crossed the road to Miranda Lodge, where Mrs. Rorman stood in the porch, gorgeous in

crimson satin, whose hue vied in richness with her nose and cheeks.

The little party sat down to the breakfast, or rather to a meal. There were cold meats of many sorts, and liquors of various descriptions—whisky, gin, and beer, and a bottle of “sherry-wine,” the latter to be genteel, as Mrs. Bulger said. They fell to. It was a dismal party. Gertrude was silent, but made many a faint attempt at a smile, as her poor old father endeavoured to be funny, or as Mr. Macalister, the Scotch first mate, made some feeble joke, the point of which might have been enveloped in the mist of his country, for all that could be seen of it.

The banquet over, Mr. Macalister rose to his feet, and begged the company to charge their glasses; Mrs. Rorman, remarking that her doctor had ordered her to drink gin, said she must have the least drop more to do honour to the toast.

“Leddies and gentlemen,” began Mr.

Macalister, "I'm nae muckle guid at speech-making, and I aye like to ca' a spade a spade, and without mair talk a'va, I'll just ask ye to drink the health o' the newly married couple, my respeckit captain and his guid leddy. Here's to ye, captain, and to ye, Mistress Giles, and I'll just nae say ony mair."

And he drained his glass of whisky and water, and sat down.

"Come, Gatty, my lass, you'd better change your fine clothes, or we'll be too late for the train."

And Gertrude went upstairs to her little room with Mrs. Bulger, and changed her wedding-dress for a neat blue serge costume of her own making. The storm was coming; the poor girl could not help it; two or three hysterical sobs, and she had a good cry in Mrs. Bulger's arms, in which the good-hearted, stout old lady heartily joined, and, I believe, as heartily enjoyed.

Gertrude showed little trace of tears as she entered the parlour, and, with smiling face, said she was ready to start.

Mrs. Bulger was glad of the excuse of going out to fetch a cab, and so get a minute to cool her swollen eyelids.

The cab came to the door; Gertrude got in, followed by her husband, and as they drove off, a great, old, worn-out slipper, very much down at the heel, from the capacious foot of Mrs. Rorman, fell into the lap of the bride :

“Just for luck, Totter,” she said; “I could not help it, and it don’t matter much—it was quite worn out, and I haven’t far to go.”

And the reduced party returned to the parlour, shortly to be joined by Mr. Bulger, who, at eleven o’clock that evening, in his own opinion, was in a very happy state, and was with difficulty conducted home by his muscular, good-hearted, and certainly better half.

Meanwhile, Captain and Mrs. Giles had driven to the Victoria Station, and were journeying to Margate, where they intended staying until the *Camperdaisy* was once more ready for the captain's command, when Gertrude would accompany her husband on a voyage to Otago.

The captain had taken rooms on the cliff at Margate, and, although it was late in the year, the weather was very pleasant. Giles took her for long drives about the Isle of Thanet, and to Ramsgate, and once as far as Minster. About ten days of their honeymoon had passed away, when Giles was summoned to London on some business connected with his ship. He started for town in the morning, but expected to return the same night, and Gertrude was left in Margate by herself.

James Giles had already shown the coarse and brutal side of his nature to his young bride. One night, having imbibed more whisky than he should have done, and

having reached a state of maudlin affection that shocked and disgusted his young wife, he insisted on her taking a glass of grog herself; willing and obedient in everything, this was too much for her—she resolutely refused. Whereupon Giles set about cursing and abusing her, and heaping every insult upon her that could wound and horrify a young wife. She made no reply: this seemed to aggravate him the more; with a still more filthy expression than he had as yet used, he drained his glass, and threw the soaked lump of lemon in the bottom of it in his wife's face, and telling her she might go to a place which there seemed every probability of his reaching first, he swung out of the room and did not come home all night.

There is no need to try and describe poor Gertrude's feelings after this; she prayed for patience, and determined to take no notice of his brutality. The next day he came home about noon, looking extremely foolish,

and seemed inclined to swagger, but Gertrude met him with a look as if nothing had happened, and said :

“Shall I get you some tea, James? I have it ready.”

This was too much even for the savage brute.

“Hang it,” he cried; “I don’t deserve this! Do you forgive me, Gatty?”

To which she replied :

“Whatever you do, James, I hope I shall never forget I am your wife.”

So, with a promise that he would never drink too much again, and that he would mend his ways, d——d if he wouldn’t! the miserable scene of the previous night was apparently forgotten.

Giles started for town, and Gertrude was left to herself. In the afternoon she wrapped herself up and started for a lonely walk on the cliff towards Broadstairs. She had walked some distance, and had casually ob-

served a man, apparently following her, some way behind. This gave her no alarm, for it was broad daylight, and there were many people about. She came to a cutting in the cliff, by which she descended to the beach below. Being low water, she determined to return to the town by the sands. After walking a short distance, buried in her own thoughts, she turned round a bluff of the cliff, where, feeling somewhat tired, she sat down on a rock to rest. It was a quiet spot, and out of the wind. She was thinking of her young and already blasted life, and wondered if she would have strength to bear the burden of it, when suddenly a man's figure appeared before her, and she heard the words :

“Couldn't have been planned better, my dear ; it almost seems as if you expected me,” and looking up, Dick Rorman was standing before her.

Rising to her feet, she exclaimed :

"What do you mean, Mr. Rorman? and how came you here?"

"I mean, my dear, that I have been in Margate for a week, waiting for this opportunity. And now I've got it I don't mean to miss it," he replied.

"I don't understand you. I am going home now, and I must beg that you will neither follow nor accompany me," and she moved as if to pass him.

"Not so fast, Mrs. Giles. Listen to me you shall. You've given me the slip. I don't blame you so much as your d——d rascally old father. But it is not too late yet. I know you can't care a hang for that brute of a stepbrother of mine. If you stick to him he'll be the death of you in a month, if he has not whacked you already."

Gertrude's face was crimson.

"Let me go," she cried.

"You shall hear me," he exclaimed. "Your tell-tale face betrays you. The brute has

already begun his tricks. You can escape from him ; I have coin enough now. There is a ship, there, lying in the Downs, bound for the Cape. Before night we can be on board. I know the skipper well ; and no one will ever guess what has become either of you or me. You must know I love you, and always have loved you. You must."

"Silence! I'll hear no more!" she cried. "How dare you insult me thus? If you can't respect me as a woman, at least remember that I am a wife!" and again she tried to break from him.

"Oh, Gertrude!" he cried. "My life has been vicious and wicked, but for your sake I will give up all. With an angel like you I must lead a better life. Come with me—come with me, my darling! You must, and shall!"

And the brute endeavoured to seize her in his arms. Gertrude screamed, and tried to struggle out of his embrace.

"It's no good struggling, Gertrude ; you are mine now and for ever ;" and his loathsome lips were pressed to her screaming mouth.

He suddenly felt his victim torn from his grasp, and a well-directed blow between the eyes placed him on his back on the sands. He was on his feet in a moment, and rushed on his assailant, a tall young man, with fair hair and bright blue eyes, which now appeared almost like two balls of blue-fire. Rushing at him, Rorman was met once more by two terrific blows, full in the face, which were quite a sufficient token that his opponent was a perfect master of the "noble science." Struggling to his feet with his face all over blood, with a curse he confessed himself beaten, and turning to poor Gertrude, who had risen from the ground, and was standing, with shaking knees and clasped hands, in mute astonishment, gazing on the prowess of her rescuer, he hissed out the words :

“ You ——, you have escaped me this time. Now mark my words. If ever there can be a fiend to walk the earth, that fiend I’ll be to you. If I live, so help me God, I’ll be your ruin, wherever you live, wherever you go, wherever——”

What more he would have said goodness only knows : the young stranger quietly walked up to him, and said :

“ You skulking blackguard !—you mean, pitiable coward !—if you open your mouth once more I’ll not leave a whole bone in your beastly body. For two pins I’d bear you off a prisoner in triumph to Margate for assaulting this lady. If you show your face there, or anywhere in the neighbourhood where I am, without a moment’s warning, I hand you over to the police. So, while you have the chance, clear out, and be off.”

Muttering curses, and shaking his fist at the pair, he slowly moved off towards Broadstairs.

Poor Gertrude, now all danger was over, did what any other woman would probably do under the same circumstances—fainted.

The stranger quickly brought her to, and, giving her his arm, led her back towards Margate.

CHAPTER III.

"*Oliver.* And what wilt thou do? beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in; I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of your will; I pray you leave me."

As You Like It, Act i. sc. i.

THE old school *for* acting seems to have passed away, or to be passing away, with the old school *of* acting. Time was when the dramatic companies at such theatres as the Theatres Royal Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, as well as those temples of the drama in other large towns, were equal in talent and capability to the best London companies. In our days stock companies are scattered. Easy and not extremely expensive railway travelling has worked a great change.

A company is formed in London to produce one or more plays, which may be latest metropolitan successes, or a combination of recognised talent may be formed for the presentation of some of the old comedies. The companies start, visiting town after town and city after city, staying a week or a fortnight in each place. By these means even the thriving little market town of Mud, whose population scarcely knows what a play is, and which does not even possess a theatre, opens the doors of its Corn Exchange, in order that its public may enjoy a very excellent representation of one of the masterpieces of English comedy, given by a very fair company of artists.

But these travelling companies have quite done away with the good old stock-company system, and with the extinction of that system I fear all school for acting has passed away.

At the time of this story, while Captain and Mrs. Giles were spending their honeymoon at Margate, the Theatre Royal of that seaport

was visited by a company of actors under the style of the Old English Comedy Company. The "leading man" (the "Charles Surface," "Young Marlowe," the "Captain Absolute," etc.) of the company was a young man whose *nom de théâtre* was Arthur Cuthbert. He was twenty-six years of age, and had been on the stage over six years. He was the elder son of a clergyman, and it had been intended that he should follow the sacred profession of his father. His mother died when he was quite young, and he was but nineteen when his father died also, and left Arthur and his only brother William to the care of a City uncle. Arthur had been well educated, and had just left Marlborough when his father died. It had been intended that the elder son should at once proceed to Oxford; but Arthur's tastes did not lie in that direction, and after a tremendous row with his uncle-guardian he ran away and became a utility-man at the Theatre Royal Birmingham. He wrote a graphic

account of his first appearance in public to his dear brother Bill, who was still at Marlborough, and was two years his junior. He was allowed to make his bow to the public on the professional boards as one of the officers in the last act of "The Lady of Lyons." By what influence he was allowed to make his first appearance in a "speaking part" he never revealed to his brother.

The City uncle—who, as a strict Dissenter of the most severe type, would as soon have entered a Roman Catholic church as a theatre—washed his hands of his devilishly-disposed nephew, and refused to allow him more than a pitiful pound a week to keep him from starving. Arthur's salary began at a pound a week, and with the one he received from his guardian he imagined himself passing rich. He worked hard and did his duty. His stage-manager was a kind-hearted gentleman, devoted to his profession, and finding a germ of talent in the young Cuthbert, fostered and

made the most of it. By the kindness and good judgment of this gentleman Arthur quickly rose in his profession, and at the commencement of his second season was full walking gentleman in the establishment.

Meanwhile, Arthur's brother, William Curzon (Curzon was Arthur's real name also), had left Marlborough, and had gone into Scotland to learn sheep-farming. Thus two years passed away, and Arthur reached his majority.

Mr. Theophilus Ugden—the maternal uncle of William and Arthur, the City uncle and guardian before alluded to—wrote a dignified business communication to his elder nephew, acquainting him with the fact that, on such and such a day, he should be willing to hand over to him, his nephew, a cheque for five thousand pounds, to which he was entitled under his father's will, and a certain sum from accumulation of interest, etc., etc. ; and finished up with a prayer that the Almighty,

in His good time, would bring him into the true and narrow path, etc.

Arthur obtained leave of absence, went up to town, and straight to his uncle's office in Austinfriars. Arriving, he jumped out of the cab, full of health and spirits, and entered the office, where, shaking hands with one of the head clerks, who before this had been a good friend to him, he asked if his uncle was in. He was shown through a dark passage and ushered into his uncle's private room. The place was dingy in the extreme, and dimly lit; not a chair, not a piece of paper on the writing-desk, was out of its place; everything was formal, stiff, and uncompromisingly business-like, as the head of the firm himself.

Mr. Theophilus Ugden sat at his writing-table. No comfortable arm-chair received his form; he occupied a horse-hair-seated chair, with an uncomfortably straight back. He was about fifty-five years of age, with a

cadaverous face, and eyebrows arched upwards in a peculiar manner, as if they had involuntarily taken and kept that position in order to act in unison with the constantly heaven-appealing eyes beneath. Of course his upper lip was shaved; beneath his chin he wore a sandy-grey Newgate frill. His face was a mixture of severity, humility, hypocrisy, and obsequiousness.

Arthur entered the room in a hearty manner, cordially holding his hand out to his guardian, with a "How-d'ye-do, uncle?"

Mr. Ugden looked coldly at him, taking no notice of his extended hand.

"This, Mr. Curzon," said he, "is a purely business interview, and we need no more than is absolutely necessary to allude to the, to me, unfortunate relationship between us. I must emphatically decline to defile myself by taking the hand of an abandoned profligate, who——"

"Come, come, uncle, no personalities!"

cried Arthur, half inclined to be angry. "Let's to business with all my heart. If it is impossible to be friends, let us pretend a little courtesy."

"Friends, sir!" exclaimed the uncle, rising in great dignity. "Friendship implies equality. If you insult me thus, sir, I must leave my clerk to settle this business for me, which——"

"I wish to goodness you had," broke in Arthur.

"Which, as a brother and a Christian, I felt bound to undertake. Had your poor father lived, his days would never have been long, after his son had so far disgraced him as a parent and as a Christian."

"Well, uncle," returned Arthur, trying to curb his rising wrath, "if you are a specimen of a Christian, thank heaven my poor father never was!"

"No blasphemy, young man. Here is a cheque. Take it; and I am convinced your

abhorred and evil ways will soon deprive you of every farthing of your patrimony. Then perhaps, when starvation comes as the reward of your crimes and wickedness, you may repent. Till then, I wash my hands of you entirely, and disown you altogether."

"I am but just twenty-one years of age," returned Arthur, in great anger, "but I have seen enough of the world voluntarily to teach me to avoid such villainous hypocrisy, such contemptible self-assumption of godliness, as is embodied in one who appears to have set at defiance all the laws of nature, by being the brother of so true and good a man as my dear father."

"Leave the room. None of your play-house jargon here, sir," cried the enraged uncle.

"Well, uncle, perhaps I speak rather strongly; but good-bye, I trust when next we meet your chapel-going propensities will have taught you a little charity. Good-bye."

And Arthur swung out of the room and out of the office. Before he got to the end of the street his hot young blood had partially cooled, and his good heart and nature returned to him, and he thought that, whatever the man was, he was his uncle, and that he had shown great rudeness and want of respect to him. Acting on the impulse of the moment, he ran back, and, bursting into his astonished uncle's room, began :

“Uncle, I was wrong. In the heat of——”

But Mr. Ugden would hear no more. In violent forgetfulness of his proprieties he stormed and raved at the young man.

“Out of my sight, you d——d play-acting young reprobate ! Here, Larkins ! Storny !—take this beast of Satan and throw him into the street.”

He was almost mad with rage, and seizing Arthur by the shoulders, fairly hustled the poor lad into the street. The clerks had never seen the “head” in such a fury, nor heard him use such violent language.

Arthur, once outside, burst out laughing, saying to himself, "Well, and if I was wrong. I tried to apologise," and went off with his cheque to the bank. On his way thither he met his friend, the clerk in his uncle's office, returning from his mid-day meal, and, describing what had taken place with that individual, telling him that he intended to deposit his patrimony, for the present, in the same bank upon which his uncle's cheque was drawn, his friend, the clerk, offered to go with him and introduce him. And so Arthur deposited the money in Blank, Blankly and Co.'s bank, and immediately wrote his first cheque. Leaving £5,000 in the bank, he said good-bye to his friend the clerk, and trotted off with, to him, the enormous sum of four hundred and thirty odd pounds in his breeches pocket.

He first went to Bennett's, in Cheapside, and bought two handsome gold watches and two neat though massive chains. On the

inside of the case of one watch he ordered to be inscribed, "To dear Bill, from his loving brother Arthur," with the date of his own twenty-first birthday. He then left the shop with seventy pounds less in his pocket. Taking a hansom cab, he drove to Covent Garden, where, drawing up to the steps of an hotel, he took a bed for the night. It was now late in the afternoon, and having eaten nothing since his breakfast before he started from Birmingham, he ordered dinner for six o'clock. After despatching this meal in solitary state, he prepared to go to the Olympic, and after the performance supped at the far-famed Evans' supper-rooms, and imagined he had enjoyed his evening thoroughly, only longing that his brother Bill had been with him to share his pleasures.

The next day he called at Bennett's for his brother's watch, the inscription on which was finished, and despatched it to his brother in

Scotland, and in the afternoon returned to Birmingham. On the following Sunday he gave a small banquet to his friend the stage-manager and a few of his intimates. Dear old Mrs. Colderson, the "first old woman" of the company, with whom Arthur was a special favourite, promised to come and bring with her Miss Alice Erskine, a charming young lady—in fact, the "walking lady" of the company. These, with one or two more, made a very pleasant party, and great fun they had, keeping up the merriment till a very late hour.

Arthur for some time had been studying the money market, and had consulted with his friend the stage-manager, who was rather fond of dabbling in stocks, and who by letter introduced his young friend to a stockbroker in London whom he knew very well.

Our "walking gentleman" (now with "share of juveniles") invested his £5,000 in India railway stock, which was safe, and brought

him in a very fair income apart from his professional earnings.

Money begets money, and money is a very long step, if properly used, on the road to success in any profession.

Let two doctors start a practice in a town—one with a few thousand pounds to help him, and the other with a few thousand nothings. Let both be equally skilled in their profession, and see which the most quickly rises to public favour and success. So in any profession show is powerful, but the power of making a show is still more so.

Arthur was by instinct scrupulously careful in stage dress and appointments. He was naturally clever, and worked hard—so with many others. Arthur knew what was correct, and could afford to pay to be so. Of course, the result was his speedy advancement. He had an offer to join the company at the Theatre Royal Bristol for the next season. Of course he accepted it. Before the end of

the season at Birmingham, his brother William came from the north to stay with him for a week or two. They had a glorious time together. Of course, Bill thought Arthur a second Kemble, etc. Bill was introduced to several members of the company, and was evidently intensely smitten by the charms of the lively and accomplished Miss Alice Erskine.

During William's visit Arthur gave several entertainments in his honour, such as expeditions to Kenilworth, Stratford-on-Avon, etc., a picnic or two. Among the invited guests Mrs. Colderson and Miss Erskine were invariably included, and at night Bill would expatiate to his brother upon the marvellous beauty and talent of the fair Alice.

So time passed on. Arthur became a provincial actor of considerable renown. After he had been but four years in the profession, in partnership with another actor, he got a company together, and tried his fortune as part

manager of a travelling dramatic company. As members of his troupe he was fortunate in securing his old friends Mrs. Colderson and Miss Alice Erskine.

In some towns he lost money—in others he was more successful. After his first year as a manager he found himself out of pocket to the tune of some ninety pounds. He had some suspicions as to the honesty of his acting manager and his partner, so he determined to take the venture entirely on his own shoulders. At all events, in six months he had made a good deal of money by his management.

It was during his second season as manager of the Old English Comedy Company that Arthur Cuthbert visited Margate while our friends Captain and Mrs. Giles were spending their honeymoon in that delightful watering-place.

It was Saturday afternoon—the afternoon of the last night of his week's visit to the town. Treasury was over ; he had paid his

company their weekly salaries ; he had lost money in Margate. He started off for a brisk walk to Broadstairs by himself. He walked to the little port along the cliffs, returning by the sands. A fresh breeze was blowing, and the sea was rapidly running in with noisy rush. In spite of this he thought he heard a woman's scream. He heard it again, and running forward to the spot from whence he thought the sound came, and turning round a rocky bluff, he came upon Gertrude Giles screaming and struggling in the loathsome embrace of the ruffian Dick Rorman.

The immediate results of Arthur's opportune arrival have been described in the last chapter.

After Rorman had slunk off, muttering curses, and after the young actor had brought poor Gertrude out of her fainting fit, Arthur placed Mrs. Giles's arm in his own, and begged to be allowed to conduct her to her home. Gertrude mumbled out something about thanks,

and taking her protector's arm for support, staggered along for about a mile without speaking. Arthur assured her, if she pleased, he would stay in Margate in order to bring the ruffian to justice, having already told her it was his last day in the town. She begged him on no account to think of it. Her husband would return that night ; she only regretted that he could not stay, that her husband might thank him in person. He would give her his name ? It was so kind of her to ask for it, but his service was so trivial he would beg her to forget it. He was very glad he had arrived in time, but he had a horror of being considered a hero. She really must pardon him if he withheld his name.

They arrived at the flight of stairs which leads from the beach to the fort. They ascended, and once more begging him to tell her his name, which he once again gently declined to give, she exclaimed :

“ Well, I am so nearly home now I will

trouble you no further. If you won't tell me your name, I will tell you mine. I am Mrs. Giles. My husband is captain of a merchant ship, and we soon start for the Antipodes."

"Strange! My brother starts for New Zealand in a few weeks, but he has not chosen a ship yet," returned Arthur.

"And now good-bye," said she, "and many, many thanks for your kindness and your protection."

They shook hands and parted.

Was their meeting fate or coincidence?

CHAPTER IV.

“The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Oh merrily did we drop.”

COLERIDGE : *Ancient Mariner*.

POOR GERTRUDE, finding herself once more at home, and alone in her lodgings, threw herself on the sofa, and remained there, how long she could never tell, in a state of almost stupefaction. And as her dull and hapless past life, with its most recent horrible incidents, passed through her mind, among the dark, frowning, lowering clouds, as it were, of the picture, the bright, kindly face of her deliverer of that afternoon flitted like a glimpse of sunshine.

“Who can he be?” she thought. “So noble ! so modest ! so kind !”

She was startled from this dreamy state by the entrance of her husband, who had just returned from town. It was now very late, the room was in perfect darkness, and the fire had gone out. Entering the house, he had found a letter waiting for him on the table in the hall. It had evidently been left by hand. He read it, and rushed upstairs to the sitting-room.

"Are you there, Mrs. Giles?" he called.

"Oh, James! have you come back?" she answered, almost pleased to see him, and rising from the sofa.

"Come back? Yes, and it seems a pity I wasn't back sooner."

"Oh, if you had only never gone away!" cried Gertrude.

"None of your tricks. If you had had your way, you would have had me away for the night, you—you—get a light, you artful minx."

He spoke somewhat thickly, which betrayed

his manner of comforting the inner man on his journey from town.

"Good heavens, James, what do you mean?" said Gertrude, seeking a match on the mantel.

"Strike a light, and read this!" he cried.

Gertrude lit the gas, and took the letter from her husband. It ran as follows :

"POOR OLD MAN, AND STEP-BROTHER,

"I am sorry for you. Married scarcely three weeks, and your dear, innocent wife to be at her tricks already! I came down to Margate to see you, having only an hour or two to spare, and found you out. I thought I would take a stroll before I took the train back to town; I walked on the sands under the cliff, when, all of a sudden, I came on your amiable spouse, fast in the arms of a — well, ask her yourself what she thinks of a tall, handsome young man, with fair, curly hair, and bright blue eyes, etc. Seeing

me, she implored me to keep her secret ; I've done my duty, Jim, and am sorry for you."

"Oh, God Almighty ! Is there such a villain in the world ?" cried Gertrude, passionately.

"So your old flame has shown you up, my dear ?" sneered her husband. "Have you any defence ? or do you plead guilty at once ? You sheep-faced hypocritical——"

Gertrude would hear no more. Jumping to her feet, her eyes darting from her head, she almost towered in her indignation.

"Silence !" she cried. Her husband cowered before her. "You think because you've found me hitherto a gentle, submissive girl, that I will for ever bear insult on insult. How dare you pretend to believe the lying insults of your brutal brother against your wife ? Oh, you pitiful creature ! God forgive me, you are not even a man !"

For a moment the husband was staggered.

Then, taking up the letter with a sneering laugh, he asked :

“How about the fair and curly stranger, eh?”

Gertrude felt the blood rising over her face and neck.

“See how your blush betrays you. My good woman, you’re not old enough in shame to play these tricks yet. Who is your lover, eh?”

Gertrude regained her composure, and in a quiet voice detailed the whole of the events of the past afternoon. At her description of the ruffian Rorman’s conduct his brow grew dark, and at the end of her account he was completely convinced of the truth of her statement. Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him.

“All very well,” he said ; “but his name? Tell me, wife, that I may thank him.”

“He would not tell me. I begged and begged him to do so, that I might tell

you. He said he hated to be made a hero, and would not give me his name."

Giles seemed to muse for a time, talking half to himself.

"What she says may be true. It's just what one might expect from that beast Dick. Yet the name. It ain't likely—it ain't likely. Wife, are you guilty or are you not?"

Gertrude looked up.

"Do you still doubt me, James?" she asked, quietly.

"No, I'll be d——d if I do," he cried, bluntly, and took her in his arms and kissed her. And they were really now better friends than they had been since their marriage. He cursed and raved against Dick Rorman half the night, vowing he would be the death of him if he ever saw him again.

But the name of the stranger? Giles was constantly on the rack of doubt. If ever he felt angered with his wife he held the fair and curly stranger before her, and mocked her in

the cruellest manner. Ah, Master Cuthbert, your excessive modesty has given Giles a handle by which he can screw up the rack to the nicest torture-pitch for his unfortunate wife.

After another ten days at Margate they returned to London, to Bellerophon Villa, where Gertrude had the additional pleasure of the company of her dram-drinking mother-in-law. Giles gave his wife money, and bade her prepare her outfit for the voyage, and he was certainly very kind in explaining to her, as well as his experience taught him, what was necessary, even for a lady, during a long voyage in a sailing vessel.

At last all was ready. Gertrude took an affectionate and loving leave of her friend Mrs. Bulger. Giles presented old Totter with a sum of money, bidding him be careful of it, as he would get no more till he returned, which would be in the course of a year or so. Nothing was heard of Rorman. No one

knew what had become of him, and no one cared.

Gertrude said good-bye to her father, and, getting into a cab one miserably rainy morning, drove with her husband to the city.

Life had so little charm for the poor young wife, that the blank look-out for her during the sea-voyage had few terrors for her.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon, Captain Giles and his wife left the Fenchurch Street station for Tilbury, where the ship's boat was waiting for them to take them on board the *Camperdaisy*, which was lying out in the stream.

So many excellent tellers of veritable stories have adopted, in my opinion, the very good plan of introducing into their narratives extracts from diaries which have come into their possession in connection with the history they were editing, I can only think it right to follow the example set me by novelists before me. Having at my elbow the diary kept by

one William Curzon during his voyage from London to Port Chalmers, Otago, New Zealand, I here reproduce certain portions of it, relative to the story I am telling. Before doing so, however, I must explain how it was that William Curzon determined to seek his fortunes in New Zealand.

Having thoroughly learned the art of sheep-farming in Scotland, William obtained a post of manager of a farm in the Lammermuirs, where he completed his agricultural education, previous to looking out for a farm for himself.

His admiration for the pretty and clever young actress had ripened into love. He had come into his patrimony, and his future looked bright and promising. He constantly made a journey to the south to see his brother on his tour, and Arthur quickly found out that he himself was not the only attraction which brought his brother from the north.

On one of these visits, William declared his

passion, and poured a torrent of love-language into the ears of the fair Alice Erskine. She received his adulation most kindly, but was obliged to assure him that it was impossible. With all his eloquence, he besought her not to say so, and at last elicited from her that her heart was already irrevocably given to another. Poor William received the blow quietly, and told his brother all. Arthur was surprised at Miss Erskine's refusing his brother, and told him it was almost impossible that she should be engaged to anyone else without his (Arthur) knowing it. If he had been her own brother, they could not be more intimate.

However, William took his answer as final, and announced his intention of going out to New Zealand to try his fortune. He lost no time. He said farewell to his brother, and went to town, having arranged his affairs in the north by letter. It seemed to him that home was hateful to him now, and he longed

to be away. He had so built upon the hopes of marrying Alice Erskine, and settling down comfortably as an English farmer ; but it was all over now.

The first ship by which he could start for Otago, as it happened, was the *Camperdaisy*, Captain Giles. He took his cabin, and went to Silver's, in Cornhill, where he ordered his outfit and cabin-fittings.

During the morning of the day on which he was expected to be on board the *Camperdaisy*, which was lying off Gravesend, he made a formal farewell visit to his uncle, Mr. Ugden, who was very gracious to him, and presented him with three tracts, expressing his regret that they were not very appropriate to the occasion. One was entitled, "Betty Buggins, the Bathing - Machine Woman ; or, Salt-Water Conversion." "That is the most fitting tract I can find at present," said he. No. 2 was, "The Murdering Miner's Mission ; or, The Light of the Lord Below."

No. 3—and evidently aimed at William's erring brother—was, "The Devil's Drawing-room ; or, An Actor's Ambles Hellwards."

William took the tracts with a wry face. His uncle gave him his blessing, telling him he should try and send him a nice present on board the ship before he started. And William drove off to Fenchurch Street, and took train for Tilbury.

And now I will leave him to tell his own story of the voyage ; at least, as much of it as may have reference to the veracious history I am writing.

"*Nov. 26th.*—Wretchedly wet. Came on board at 3.30. The ship in horrible state of confusion and dirt. No chance of weighing anchor till to-morrow evening at earliest, as the captain will not be on board till then, *if* then. Only three passengers arrived as yet—Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, with nurse and baby, and Mr. Blomerskoff. Mr. and Mrs. J.

seem to be very agreeable people, and occupy one of the stern cabins, which they have fitted up in rather an extraordinary style. Mr. Blomerskoff seems a strange individual. He appears to be English, though his name almost belies his appearance. He is very tall and thin, and thin also is his voice, and squeaky. Spent the afternoon in putting my cabin in order ; am very glad I have it to myself. They have fixed my bunk too high ; must have it lowered. We had tea at six ; Mr. Macalister, the first mate, presided. He is a Scotchman, and a character. I wanted to go on shore and spend the night in Gravesend, but could not get a boat to take me. My first evening on board was certainly dull and uninteresting.

“ *Nov. 27th.*—Have been in Gravesend all day. Lunched at the Falcon, and played billiards with a Mr. Maule, who (also his brother) will be a fellow-passenger. Both brothers seem to be pleasant, gentlemanly young men.

Came on board at 4.30, and found a small parcel had been sent from London for me. I at once guessed it was my uncle's promised present, and on opening it certainly expected some useful dressing-case or something of the sort. It turned out to be a ninepenny Bible from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel which he had sent me. No captain yet, but all is ready for sailing ; without doubt we shall start to-morrow. I hear the captain will bring his wife with him—hope she's agreeable. A Miss Anderson, a first-class passenger, came on board to-day, a Scotch-woman. Hope she'll prove a pleasant companion to her first-mate countryman. Played cribbage with Mr. Maule in the evening. It is now eleven, and the lights are going to be turned out. Glad I've got a large supply of candles with me. Now for bunk ; it is very narrow and very hard, but I suppose I shall get used to it in time.

“*Nov. 28th.*—We are now at the Nore or

thereabouts. The captain and his wife came on board at about half-past one. I was in the saloon. It was pouring with rain. Captain Giles is not a man of prepossessing appearance, having red hair and beard and small pig-eyes. His wife appears to be a charming lady, and very nice looking, with beautiful eyes. She looked more like a drowned rat than anything when she entered the cuddy with a number of packages and birdcages. I hear the captain has reserved a spare cabin in the saloon, to be used as a sort of aviary for larks, blackbirds, thrushes, etc., a number of which he is taking out to New Zealand for the Acclimatisation Society. These unhappy feathered prisoners are given over to the care of a midshipman. I am sorry for them. He is a jolly young fellow, but I should think a mischief-loving fiend incarnate. Half an hour after the captain came on board we weighed anchor and sailed down the river. Oh, memory of the dear old Thames from Richmond to Goring!

What an ugly prospect we got from the poop as we swung down with the stream! I did not see much of it, however, for it was very wet, and I was in the saloon most of the afternoon, chatting with the passengers and Mrs. Giles, who, I think, has charmed everyone. There is a little motion to be felt now, and some of the ladies are beginning to fear sea-sickness already. I don't feel it yet.

“*Nov. 29th.*—It has been a beautiful day. Half the sailors are still drunk. There has been very little breeze, but what there has been, thank goodness! has been favourable, and we have been moving along slowly, with all canvas set. In the afternoon most of the passengers sat out on the poop, and improved each other's acquaintance. Miss Anderson was good enough to sing to us. Her favourite song seems to be ‘Maggie's Secret.’ She has a fairly good voice, but no idea of singing. Mrs. Giles is more charming than we even expected to find her. Young Maule has a

thing he calls a seraphine on board ; it is a musical instrument, like a small harmonium, blown with one hand and played with the other. It makes pleasant music, but I fear before long we shall have had too much of it. The captain has scarcely vouchsafed a word to any of the passengers yet ; he seems a rough, rude sort of man. I can't understand so gentle and beautiful a woman as Mrs. Giles marrying such a man.

“*Nov. 30th.*—Very light breeze all day ; moving along slowly. Mr. Blomerskoff has not appeared since we left the Thames. We occasionally hear him crying, in his squeaky voice, for the steward. He has certainly made up his mind to be very bad during the voyage. Miss Anderson repeated “*Maggie's Secret*” this afternoon. I wonder whether she knows any other song. Mrs. Giles was sitting on the poop, talking to the elder Maule, when the captain came up, and I thought very crossly ordered her to go down

into her cabin. The wind is rising, and the sailors are clewing up the spanker, as Harvey, the middy, informs me. We are now flying through the water.

"*Dec. 1st.*—Very few passengers appeared at the breakfast table this morning. It has been blowing hard all day, and almost all the passengers are sick. Poor Mrs. Giles came on the poop this afternoon, but soon had to go to bed again, being very sick. Her husband seems a rough brute, but is very civil and polite to me. I am not ill yet, but am bad enough to refuse my pipe.

"*Dec. 3rd.*—No chance of writing yesterday. The captain told me this evening it was the severest gale he had ever encountered in the Bay of Biscay. When I awoke this morning at five I still thought I was dreaming. My swing tray was driving round with a circular motion. We were pitching, tossing, and rolling all at once. I wonder I had slept so long through it. I believe I was awakened by

Mr. Blomerskoff, in the next cabin to mine, howling, or rather squeaking, his prayers to be saved ; and for hours he continued, as I could hear, to suffer violently from sea sickness and noisy fear of going to the bottom. I felt very queer myself, and resorted to the brandy bottle. Weak brandy and water and hard biscuit was all I took all day, and I nibbled and sipped constantly. I did not get up till the afternoon, and though I was not sick I was very seedy. The gale has somewhat abated to-day, but few of the passengers have ventured out of their berths. Poor Mrs. Giles, I believe, has been very ill. The prayerful and fearful Blomerskoff, I fancy, must have prayed and feared himself quiet, for he has been still all day, except occasionally squeaking for the steward."

It appears, from the diary, very little of interest occurred for the few days following the gale in the Bay of Biscay. The winds

were generally unfavourable, and Mrs. Giles suffered severely, and was scarcely ever seen on deck. The next entry in the diary of any interest is dated :

“*Dec. 14th.*—The weather is now pleasantly warm, and Mrs. Giles is slightly better, and passes most of her time on deck. This afternoon we had some music on the poop. Young Maule brought out his seraphine, which is becoming a nuisance. Miss Anderson sung twice the same song, the eternal ‘Maggie’s Secret.’ She must have given us the pleasure of this ditty already a dozen times since we started. I am afraid I was rather unkind. I was sitting next to Mrs. Giles, and during Miss Anderson’s second performance of the ‘Secret’ ditty, I scribbled a few lines in my pocket-book, and handed them to Mrs. Giles. She laughed. Miss A. saw my action, and snatched at the paper, and, unfortunately, read :

“ ‘How tedious when often sung
The song of any bird,
And sweeter, too, some songs would be
If they were seldom heard.’

Miss Anderson took it in good part, and laughed ; so I expect Maggie is put on the shelf with her secret for a time.

“ *Dec. 15th.*—A lovely day. In the afternoon we all sat on the poop again, and, for the first time for many days, Mr. Blomerskoff appeared amongst us. He has a very severe cold in his head, and his voice is squeakier than ever. However, he amused us much by insisting on reciting the ‘May Queen,’ and his ‘Bake Be Early, Bother Dear’ caused much laughter, which he did not seem to understand. Mrs. Giles, who has a very pretty voice, kindly consented, after a deal of pressing, to sing. She had scarcely come to the end of the first verse, when the captain came up, and roughly ordered her to hold her row, and walked off. He seems a thorough brute. We all like Mrs. Giles very much,

and take a pleasure in doing anything for her. I do not think Mr. Maule is more attentive than any of the rest of us, but I firmly believe the captain is growing jealous of him. Anyhow, they dislike each other most cordially.

“*Dec. 16th*.—The *Camperdaisy Gazette* made its first appearance to-day. It seems to me to be an exquisite collection of bosh, my own contribution included. Mr. Blomerkoff’s ode to a pig in a sty on the forecastle is a fair specimen of the literary value of the whole. I must copy the first verse :

“ ‘Oh, dear little piggy, with eyes of Chinese,
And sweet little tail of a rat ;
I long to devour you, there at your ease,
So sleek and so lusciously fat.’ ”

I don’t think the *Gazette* will have a long existence. Mrs. Giles was to have contributed, but the carroty captain forbade her to do so.

“*Dec. 17th, Sunday*.—We had service on the poop. Young Maule insisted on playing

his seraphine in lieu of an organ, and Blomerskoff got the captain's leave to read a discourse. Neither performance was edifying. Mr. B. has been regretting all day his wicked negligence in not bringing any Sunday books to read on board. I have gracefully got rid of my Uncle Theophilus's tracts, which were received with heartfelt thanks, and upturned eyes that would have greatly rejoiced my worthy uncle.

"*Dec. 18th.*—A most extraordinary coincidence happened this afternoon. I was sitting on deck with Mrs. Giles, when, to while away the time, I brought my album up to show her. She opened the book, and the first picture in it was, of course, my dear old boy Arthur, dressed as Romeo. She looked at it for a moment, and gasped out, 'Who's that?' 'My brother Arthur,' I replied. She turned over the page, and came to Arthur in ordinary costume. 'It is he—it is he!' she exclaimed, and sat staring at the picture, and I thought

she was going to faint. I asked what was the matter ; she replied that my brother's portrait so forcibly reminded her of a friend, that it had quite startled her. We had a long talk. She told me she recognised in Arthur the most extraordinary likeness to a gentleman who had rescued her from the attack of a ruffian in Margate shortly before the vessel sailed. Knowing that Arthur had been at that seaport with his dramatic company about the time she mentioned, I felt convinced it was my dear old brother himself who had been Mrs. Giles's champion, and so told her all about him.

“*Dec. 19th.*—Evidently Mrs. Giles has told her husband about the photograph business of yesterday, for the captain came up to me this morning, and, in his rough way, shook hands with me, and said he was glad to shake the hand of the brother of the man who had been of such service to his wife. I had a long chat with Mrs. Giles this evening over my album,

and she very soon found out my secret about A. E. I am not sorry, for it is pleasant to be able to talk about her, although—— but no matter about the rest of the sentence.”

Nothing of any great importance to this story seems to have occurred till Christmas-day. The feud between Mr. Maule and the captain was growing stronger and stronger every day. It appears that the steward was taken ill with fever, there was no doctor on board, and the captain so dosed him with jalap and mercury, that it was a great wonder the patient ever recovered. During the steward's illness, the dinners were wretched, and Mr. Blomerskoff squeaked his complaints in shrill tones all over the ship. To continue the diary from Christmas-day :

“*Dec. 25th.*—A wretched Christmas. We ought to have reached the equator before this, but we are a long way off yet. The steward being ill, the dinner was vile. After dinner,

we sat on the poop, and Maule was reading Tennyson to Mrs. Giles. I noticed the captain appeared to be excited, and, I thought, somewhat the worse for liquor, and paced up and down the poop, scowling angrily at his poor wife. Maule reads remarkably well, and has a fine voice, which he knows how to use; he was reading the death of Elaine. Mrs. Giles's face was a picture: her attention was rapt; her beautiful eyes lustrous with tears, she seemed to see nothing but the fair, pale face of the dying Elaine, and Maule's rich soft voice died away with the words:

“ ‘ But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died;
So that day there was dole in Astolat.’ ”

As Maule paused after the last line, Mrs. Giles, in a sort of reverie, murmured, half to herself:

“‘Poor Elaine! but she was happy—happy.’

“The captain had been standing behind Maule’s chair during the reading of the last page of ‘Elaine,’ and at his wife’s half-muttered sentence broke out with an oath :

“‘Enough of this rot! It has gone too far. Mrs. Giles, down to your cabin. I’ll see you somewhere before you stir on deck again this voyage. I’ll teach you to carry on your infernal tricks under my very nose. And as for you,’ he continued, glaring at Maule, ‘you fawning, sneaking, sentimental cur, I’ll teach you a lesson that will last you your cursed life. To your cabin, wife, do you hear me?’

“Mrs. Giles rose from her chair; I never believed she possessed so much dignity. She spoke calmly and deliberately, looking him quietly in the face the while.

“‘Your language, James, to me is sufficiently repulsive in private, and on your

behalf I apologise to these gentlemen and ladies that you have so far forgotten yourself in their presence. I will trouble you for your arm to assist me to my cabin.'

"And she moved towards him, as if to take his arm. The man's face appeared to be that of a fiend, as, with a sharp blow, he struck down her outstretched arm; what he was about to say, nobody ever knew. We were all on our feet in a moment. Speaking for myself, I felt inclined to pitch him into the sea on the instant. Maule rushed forward, and, had it not been for his brother, I believe would have done that which I felt so immediately inclined to do. Young Maule had seized his brother's arms: the elder hissed at the captain, 'You cur!—you disgrace to anything that can be called a man! Let me go, Alfred; captain or not, I'll place a mark on you!' Before he could finish the sentence, the captain had seized a belay-pin, and brought it down with a crash on Maule's head. For-

tunately Maule wore a very stout felt hat, which was cut to pieces by the blow. Breaking from his brother's grasp, the powerful young fellow had reached Captain Giles, who, the next moment, was flat on the deck, with his face covered with blood, and roaring for Macalister, the first mate, to bring the handcuffs, and place 'the brute' in irons. I really thought Maule would have killed him. I never saw a man in such a passion. The first mate helped the captain to his feet, the latter cursing him, and telling him to bring the irons, and Macalister left the poop to do so.

" 'I'll teach you, young gentleman, to assault the captain on the deck of his ship. I am paramount here, and for the rest of this voyage you shall have a taste of the black-hole and the irons, and once on shore you shall take your reward for inciting mutiny on the high seas. Here, Macalister, place these irons on the gentleman's wrists.'

“Macalister looked at Maule and then at the captain, who was nearly foaming at the mouth.

“‘I’m just thinking, captain, that if ye’ll be wanting sick a like bit o’ dirty work done, maybe ye’ll just be doing it yersel’.

“And Macalister handed the irons to the captain, who seized them, and advanced to Maule, who had now somewhat recovered himself.

“‘You miserable hound, you had better not come near me. In my present temper I am likely to give you as food for the sharks, but that I am afraid they would refuse such foul offal!’

“Giles retreated, calling for the second mate and some of the sailors to put the man in irons.

“There was much hesitation, during which Mr. Jackson advanced to the captain, addressing him :

“‘Captain Giles, as the oldest among the

passengers in the saloon I take upon myself to address you. When we reach Otago you will be free to follow what course you choose. On behalf of my fellow-passengers, I beg to assure you of our disgust at your brutal conduct, and our abhorrence of your outrageous assault upon Mr. Maule, for which you have been most justly punished ; and finally, that, speaking again for my fellow-passengers, we will permit no further assault or degradation to be offered to Mr. Maule, senior.'

" With muttered curses and ravings about mutiny, writing in the log, imprisonment, and glaring at his wife with a ' Come to your cabin, d—n you ! ' he descended to the saloon."

CHAPTER V.

"Gower. He, knowing so, put forth to seas,
Where, when men have been, there's seldom ease,
For now the wind begins to blow,
Thunder above, and deeps below."

Pericles, Prince of Tyre.

FOR the next week after the exciting events of Christmas-day, according to young Curzon's diary, little of interest occurred on board the *Camperdaisy*. Sharks were caught, a home-ward bound vessel was spoken, they were occasionally deluged by a tropical rain. The fair Scotch maiden, Miss Anderson, appears to have betrayed the tender passion for the writer of the diary, which was not reciprocated.

On one occasion, after a huge shark had

been hooked, and was hauled on to the main-deck, and had been cut up, the head of the brute was lying by itself, with its mouth open, showing a treble row of formidable teeth. The young midddy, full of mischief, was showing the shark's head to Mr. Blomerskoff, and induced that gentleman to place his foot on the rough set of teeth. Of course, Mr. Blomerskoff, ignorant of the well-known fact that a shark does not lose the power of muscular contraction for hours after it has been caught, and even cut up, readily placed the toe of his boot in the gaping jaw, which closed at once with tenacious grip on the poor gentleman's toes. The pain could not have been very great, but it appears that his shrieks were fearful, and the sailors mustered in force from the forecastle, and enjoyed his squeaking agony.

During the week between Christmas and the New Year, Mrs. Giles was not once seen on deck or out of her cabin. The captain

spoke to none of the passengers. On New Year's eve some of the sailors came aft, dressed up in extraordinary costumes, and began to sing. The captain ordered them forward, using very coarse language, upon which, it appears, one of them advanced and gave the captain a piece of his mind, and there followed a row, the ringleader calling his skipper a lubberly coward, and asking him to come forward and fight like a man. At length the first mate interposed, and the crew returned sullenly to the fore-castle. Captain Giles had evidently prepared a very hot bed for himself, for in the diary of the first of January I read, "Things are coming to a pretty pass now. Mrs. Giles has been imprisoned in her cabin since Christmas-day, and I fear has been subjected to much ill-treatment at the hands of her brutal husband. This morning the saloon passengers held a council of war on the poop, to consider what steps ought to be taken regarding the present

conduct of the captain. 'Better dance upon a knife than interfere 'tween man and wife.' We came to the conclusion that at present nothing could be done to render any assistance to the unfortunate prisoner, still in the hands of her ruffian gaoler, and agreed to wait for the next outbreak on the part of our captain. We crossed the equator to-day, and the crew were very enraged at not being allowed to bring Neptune on board."

During the night of the 4th of January, I see from the diary, the crew broke open the fore hatch and got at the spirits which formed part of the cargo. The next day the deed was discovered, almost all the crew being drunk, and the hatch still open. An overturned paraffin lamp was found on a case of spirits, with the oil saturating the cargo around it. As the *Camperdaisy* was laden with Hollands-gin, wax vestas, and gun-powder, it was a wonder the vessel had not gone off in a magnificent firework. When

the sailors had reached a fair state of sobriety, the captain ordered the crew forward, and read to them the statement he had written in the log, and an extract from the "Merchant Shipping Act." The crew did not appear in any way awed by the captain's thunderbolt, and jeered him. One, a most unpleasant looking ruffian, according to the diary, cried out "Bravo! keep your words for us and your blows for your wife." The captain then, in a short speech, informed the crew that insubordination he would not stand, and that if he had further trouble with them he would call upon the passengers to assist him in maintaining order. The row continued for a short time, and the crew sullenly retired.

"*Jan. 6th.*—Pray heaven we reach New Zealand some day or other! After last week's escape from fire, we have to-day had an escape from being poisoned. The steward being still ill and unable to work, and our

amiable captain never appearing at meal-times, our eating arrangements have reached zero, if I may use the term. Mr. Jackson bribed the sick steward (very wicked of course) to give the key of the store-room to the under-steward. He obtained two bottles of preserved fruits, and gave them to the cook, who boiled some rice for our dinner, also against orders. We all partook of the rice and fruit, and were one and all violently sick immediately after dinner — the child seriously ill with it. We suspected the fruit, I suppose naturally attributing our punishment to our sin, and bottled up that which remained, to be analysed on reaching Dunedin. When we had sufficiently recovered, we made strict inquiries, and at last elicited the fact that the second steward, having left the pantry for a few moments, where he had placed the two jugs containing the preserved fruit, on returning, found the captain stirring the contents of the jugs,

and, having done so, returned to the saloons, carrying with him a spoon and a small vial. We considered this conclusive, but I could not help laughing heartily at the mischievous practical joke played upon us by our amiable captain, as punishment for disobeying his commands."

I next take up the diary from

"*Jan 15th.*—Poor Mrs. Giles has been confined to her cabin by her loving spouse since Christmas. Mr. Jackson once spoke to the captain, hoping that Mrs. Giles was not too ill to come on deck, and the reply was, 'that he had better mind his own business;' to this Mr. Jackson answered, 'that he considered it the business of every man, who *was* a man, to do his utmost to protect a woman from injury and degradation.' The captain replied with an oath, 'My wife is *my* wife, and I'll have you know that not only am I her husband, but I am the captain and master of this ship,

and that here, at least, my word and will are law.' 'And I'll have you know,' exclaimed Mr. Jackson, warmly, 'that though you may be king on board your ship, your subjects are at least men, and I'll remind you that the most despotic monarch may be liable to sudden deposition,' and he turned on his heel and left the skipper in a state of utter wrath and speechless indignation.

"*Jan 18th.*—The sun vertical. Spoke the ship *British Nation*; a boat came from her to us, with doctor on board, the captain having signalled for him, to see the poor man Howland, who, apparently, is dying of consumption. I sent letter and diary to date to Arthur."

The diary from this date is composed, daily, of mere lines indicating, I should imagine, the acme of dulness on board. Mrs. Giles had twice been taken for a solemn walk at midnight on the poop by her husband, but had not been allowed to speak to anyone.

On the 8th of February Mr. William Curzon had a narrow escape from a horrible death. I will continue the diary :

“ *Feb. 8th.*—I am alive, thank heaven ! At eleven this morning it was very hot ; the midday, Maule and myself determined to have a swim. It was a perfect calm, and having dressed ourselves in respectable bathing costumes, greatly to the delight of the third-class passengers, we plunged into the sea from the poop. The water was glorious, and the sensation of swimming about in the open sea hundreds of miles from land was peculiar and exciting. I swam some distance from the ship, and turning to swim back, I saw the captain on the poop gesticulating and shouting to me to return ; my two water-companions were already close to the ship. I had not heard the captain’s shouted orders to swim back till I turned to do so. Enjoying the exercise, I did not hurry. I was some

twenty yards from the vessel, when a terrible cry went up from the passengers, who crowded the side of the ship. I heard distinctly the horror-striking cry of 'Shark ! shark !' They yelled to me to swim quickly. For a moment I felt my courage and presence of mind had left me. Five minutes seemed to elapse (I suppose not six seconds in reality)—a mighty shriek came from the passengers, and an extraordinary feeling, if I may call it, of hopeless courage came over me, and with it a remembrance of something I had read regarding sharks some years ago. I quickly turned on my back, and saw not six yards behind me, following in my wake, a huge dorsal fin. The passengers were now silent as the spectral sailors on board the ill-fated ship of the *Ancient Mariner*. Having turned on my back, I began a terrific splashing with my feet, still progressing backwards towards the ship ; the fin disappeared at once, the passengers imagining the monster had dived

to seize his prey. I kept up the splashing (it seemed to me for half-an-hour) for about fifteen seconds, and felt myself hauled out of the water by the strong arms of two sailors, who were suspended from the ratlins, ready to seize me the moment I reached the ship. I had scarcely been lifted from the water, when, looking down, I beheld the huge shark just turning on its side, and opening its treble-banked mouth of teeth to seize the sweet morsel of which he was so mercifully disappointed.

“‘There was a cry and a shout
And a deuce of a rout’

as soon as I reached the deck. The captain stormed and raved at me, and turning to the middy, who was standing still in his wet undress, cursed him in choice language, and was about to give him a cuff on the side of the head, but the lad was too sharp for him, and, dodging him, flew down in his cabin to dress, as likewise did I. When I returned to

the deck, clothed, and, I hope, in my right mind, I found that they had caught the shark over the poop, by means of a huge hook attached to a chain and baited with a piece of pork. He was too big a monster to haul up on to the poop, so he was pulled round to the main-deck side of the ship and a rope noose slipped over his tail, and then in three minutes he was on board. I thought the force of his tail lashing the deck would have stove it in. Quickly and adroitly one of the sailors, with a hatchet, and with one blow, crippled the brute's tail, and with another severed it from the body. The creature was now harmless, except for his ugly mouth. The seamen, who, I think, hate sharks as a certain old gentleman is said to hate holy water, took a vicious pleasure in hacking the shark to pieces, being specially anxious to find out what had composed the last meal of their enemy. I believe they were quite disappointed at finding no traces of a devoured

seaman in the internals of my would-be anthropophagist, but solely a few nautilus, which were only sufficient to whet his appetite for me—a sort of oyster and chablis before he dined off my sleek carcase.

“*Feb. 10th.*—Macalister told me this morning he feared the captain would have a fit or something worse before the voyage ended, for he was drinking so heavily ; and he added that he did not think it was safe that Mrs. Giles should constantly be confined to her cabin with her husband in such a state. Macalister, for fear of accidents, is keeping a ship’s log for his own use, and is working the course of the ship from his own chronometer, apart from keeping account of the captain’s work. A nasty accident happened to me to-day, from which I trust no serious after-effects will come. One of the sailors in the fore-castle has a small terrier, which has lately had puppies. Walking round the ship to-day, the little brute flew out at me, and gave me

an ugly bite on the leg. She has been very snarly and snappy lately, and, as the weather is still hot, I took the precaution of obtaining a stick of caustic from the medicine-chest, and immediately cauterised the wound; and, apart from the extreme agony of the burn, I have made a nice mess of my leg, which is swollen and painful. I don't suppose the little dog has rabies, but 'a stitch in time,' etc. The captain has not left his cabin all day. The steward tells us he has, at the captain's orders, placed another case of brandy in his (the captain's) cabin."

February 11th, and 12th speak of young Curzon's wounded leg as being considerably worse. On the 13th, at Mr. Jackson's suggestion, he did not move from his bunk all day. The diary of the 14th speaks of a practical joke the passengers somewhat cruelly played upon Miss Anderson and Mr. Blomerskoff. Miss A. received a tender valentine

from Mr. B., and *vice versa*. At dinner the blushes and nervousness of both recipients nearly "set the table in a roar." I return to the diary at the date :

"Feb. 15th.—I wonder what will happen next. Shall we ever get to Otago without murder, suicide, and every other horror? I have been confined to my bunk all day again, though my leg is manifestly better. About seven o'clock this evening, when most of the passengers were in the saloon, an angry muttering was heard in the captain's cabin, which lasted some minutes. This was followed by considerable noise and loud oaths from the captain, and then by a piercing shriek, evidently from Mrs. Giles. Shriek followed shriek. Maule and Jackson jumped from their seats and rushed to the door of the captain's cabin. Finding it locked, Maule quickly burst it open, and found poor Mrs. Giles cowering in a corner, with her brutal

husband in the act of striking her with his clenched fist. Maule, so Mr. Jackson told me, was on him a moment. Giles, frenzied with drink, was no match for his powerful opponent, who quickly pinioned him on the bed. Mr. Jackson then led Mrs. Giles to his wife's cabin, and administered restoratives to her. Mrs. G., it appears, was in a dreadful state—her face swollen and bleeding from the blows of the drunken ruffian our worthy captain: Meanwhile, Maule, assisted by his brother, who had joined him, secured the maniac's (for he was little better) arms and legs, and placed him in a recumbent position on the bed. He was apparently quiet now. The elder Maule searched the cabin, and took away all the spirits he could find. He sent for Macalister, the first mate, and reported the whole affair to him, and on behalf of the passengers requested him, for the present at all events, to take command of the ship. Macalister sent for the carpenter, and ordered him to place

staples on the broken door. While this was being done he informed the captain that he considered it his duty, for the present, to take command of the ship, and until he (Giles) returned to his senses, for the safety of the passengers he must be confined to his cabin. The door was closed and a padlock placed through the staples, and the captain was locked in.

“Matters were quiet in the cabin. Jackson came to me and told me the whole affair. Mrs. Giles was now more at rest. I suggested that he (Mr. J.) should have a berth made up in my cabin, while Mrs. Giles was being looked after by Mrs. Jackson. He thanked me, and said he would send the steward to me, and went on deck to smoke a pipe. I waited some time, and the steward did not come, so I thought I would get up and see about making a bed for Mr. Jackson myself. I rose and partially dressed myself. I had scarcely done so when I heard a peculiar noise in the saloon. I quickly opened my door and found the

'jalousie' of the side of the captain's cabin pushed out, and the captain himself rushing towards the stern-cabin, which was now occupied by Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Giles. He held a revolver in his hand. I yelled out, 'Mrs. Jackson, lock your door!' He turned on me, raised his weapon, and fired. I almost felt the whiz of the bullet past my head. The next moment the drunken maniac was pinioned from behind by young Maule, who, happening to be in his cabin at the moment, and hearing me shout to Mrs. Jackson, fortunately appeared on the scene just in time to save me from a second shot. The cabin was full in a moment, and the captain once more secured. Macalister ordered him to be put in irons, and conveyed to the sail-room. This was done, and once more we felt comparatively safe. I was warmly congratulated on my lucky escape. It is now eleven o'clock, and Mrs. Giles is quieter and a little better. Mr. Jackson shares my cabin for the present."

According to the diary, little of interest occurred during the few days which followed the startling episode of the 15th of February.

On the 16th I learn from young Curzon's writing the captain was terribly ill. Macalister consulted Mr. Jackson, who turned to his "Family Doctor's Vade Mecum," and, between them, they prescribed for the patient with drugs from the ship's medicine chest. It was a pity they did not make a mistake, which apparently they did not, for in a few days he quieted down, and was laid on the bed in his own cabin.

While the captain was recovering, so also was young Curzon, whose leg quickly got well again; and the practical joke in honour of St. Valentine was bearing fruit which was ripening as rapidly as it did in the case of a similar joke which was played upon a certain Lady Beatrice and the world-renowned celibate, Master Benedick. Blomerskoff and Miss Anderson appear to have grown as "thick

as peas" since the 14th—woe to the awakening. The little midddy found them repeatedly in some or other retired nook—under a sail or behind the wheel-house ; and the mischief-loving lad seems to have amused the male saloon passengers immensely by his imitations of the squeaking, love-sick Blomerskoff. Mrs. Giles was very ill for ten days after her deliverance from her husband, and was most kindly nursed and tended by Mrs. Jackson. Mr. Jackson still shared young Curzon's cabin. On the 27th of February Macalister, the first mate, requested that the whole of the first-class passengers would meet in the saloon at twelve o'clock on the following day, as the captain wished to make a statement to them. I copy from the diary that which took place.

"*Feb. 28th.* — This morning, at twelve o'clock, all the passengers (first-class) assembled in the saloon to meet the captain at his own request. Captain Giles came out of his

cabin and stood at the head of the cuddy table. I never saw such a change in a man. He was gaunt, thin, and cadaverous. As far as I can remember these were his words: 'Ladies and gentlemen — having partially recovered from a most severe illness, brought on, I am bound to confess, by a cause which should be a disgrace to any man, more especially a captain of a passenger ship, I have begged you to meet me here to-day that I may crave your forgiveness for my terrible conduct, when, through my own vicious courses, I was a raving lunatic. I can do no more than express my sincere sorrow. I wish to say one thing, however, and that is an expression of thanks to the gentlemen who so bravely defended me from myself and the fearful consequences of my — I can use no other word for it — my crime. To Mr. Maule and Mr. Jackson I shall ever henceforth look as my saviours and protectors. At Mr. Macalister's request, to whose prompt

and ready action perhaps the present safety of passengers, ship, and crew is due, I humbly take back the command of my vessel ; and, with heartfelt thanks for your kindness, and the sincerest apologies for the annoyance and trouble I have caused you, I crave, in all humility, your trust for the remainder of the voyage.' The captain stopped, and I almost thought I heard a squeaky voice at the end of the cabin exclaim ' bosh ;' at all events Miss Anderson gave an audible ' hush.' Mr. Jackson advanced and replied : ' Captain Giles, we are pleased to see you once more in a condition in which we can meet you and speak to you. As to the past, this is hardly the tribunal before which you can either plead or be judged. To Mr. Macalister we owe our safety in a great danger, and in returning the command of this ship to you, we have sufficient confidence in him to believe he is acting for the best. We trust that, for the remainder of the voyage, we shall find in you

such a commander of this ship as most assuredly your conduct hitherto has painfully failed to prove you to be. Of other matters I will not speak, and must beg to think that they had better remain as they are. For the present, Captain Giles, good-morning,' and turning to the assembled passengers he added, 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, who's for a game of quoits on deck?' and the captain, with lowering brows and grinding teeth, vanished into his cabin.

"*March 1st.*—I rose early, and was somewhat surprised to see the aviary (the cabin that was inhabited by the starlings and other unfortunate feathered bipeds, under the care of the middy) being dismantled. Alas! many of the wretched little emigrants had already taken flight to another world—that is, had had the chance of doing so, if a future state were granted to them. Those birds which still are alive—and most of them are like the poor Jackdaw of Rheims, their

“‘Eye so dim,
So wasted each limb,’

have been transferred to the middy's cabin ; I should call this deed an immediate sentence of death. Later in the day, I saw the ex-aviary being fitted up as a sumptuous cabin, and I then discovered this was being done by order of the captain for the reception of his wife. The weather getting squally and cold ; the ship rolling heavily ; the poor man Howland, in the steerage, who is dying of consumption, can scarcely live till morning.

“*March 2nd.*—The poor fellow died at four this morning. He was committed to the deep this afternoon ; it was a sad mockery to hear the captain read the burial-service, which he insisted on doing ; but it would have been funny instead, if Blomerskoff had taken his place, and he wanted to. A ludicrous incident took place at the most solemn moment. The child, Ethel, who shares Miss Anderson's cabin, and who is being sent out to New

Zealand under the care of the captain and his wife, is a most—well, an *enfant terrible*, with a vengeance; as such, she was not allowed on the poop to witness the burial service. Just as the moment came for tilting the poor man's body—which was sown up in canvas, over the side, when everyone was awed to deadly silence, and nothing was heard but the howling of the gale through the rigging, the vessel gave a tremendous lurch, and a heartrending scream rose from the cuddy skylight. The service over, we hastened into the saloon, and found the wretched little Ethel howling beneath a pile of camp-stools, forms, hassocks, pillows, etc., etc. It appears the wicked child, determined not to be disappointed at not viewing the sad ceremony, had piled up everything she could lay hands on, and then climbed up to the top of the miscellaneous heap, till her eyes were on a level with the skylight; the lurch came, and she and her watch-tower were precipitated

to the floor. We picked her out of the *débris*, expecting to find her half-dead. Bruised she certainly was, and scratched, but she quickly shook herself together, and, screaming with delight, exclaimed :

“ ‘ I saw him ; I saw him ; I heard him go flop ! ’ ”

From this date the voyage seems to have grown less and less interesting. On the 5th of March Mrs. Giles took up her quarters in the ex-aviary, and having, to a great extent, recovered her health, often took the air on the poop, when young Curzon had long chats with her, and found a willing listener to the sad out-pourings of his poor heart, which only had room for the memory of his beloved Alice Erskine. On the 6th of March they encountered a terrific gale, and the entire port bulwarks of the ship were stove in. On the 9th, all the passengers were immensely astonished to see the captain and Mrs. Giles walking up and down the poop together, arm-

in arm. "Forgive and forget," squeaked Blomerskoff to the fair Anderson. Anyhow, from this date they were friends, although she still occupied the ex-aviary. Provisions and water were getting short, and on the 15th the crew again broached the cargo, and most of them got drunk. Mrs. Giles told young Curzon that her husband had most humbly apologized to her and entreated her forgiveness, and she thought it was but her duty to return to him. The 23rd instant was William's birthday, when, it appears from the diary, he cleared out his cabin and gave an afternoon party to the gentlemen passengers, who all, save Blomerskoff, accepted his invitation; he, Mr. Blomerskoff, could not leave his Caledonian enchantress.

On the afternoon of the 31st of March the welcome sound of "Land oh!" rang through the ship, and faint clouds on the horizon were pointed out to the passengers as the summits of antipodal mountains. Then came the

excitement—the deck was crowded with passengers ; feuds, if not deadly, none the less virulent, that had sprung up during the long and tedious voyage were forgotten. At the sound of those magic words “Land ch!” hypochondria, hysteria, nostalgia—those phantoms which haunt a ship during so many months at sea—fled in haste at the approach of the welcome land.

At six the ship was but seventeen miles from the shores of New Zealand, and the wooded landscape, lit by the setting sun, was plainly discernible through a pair of glasses. At seven they were still nearer, and young Curzon in his diary grows enthusiastic in his description of the sun setting over the mountains. He says :

“It was certainly the most glorious sunset effect I have ever seen in my life. Some of Nature’s artistic work in putting the tropical sun to bed was beyond anything I had before conceived ; but this transcended all. The sun,

setting behind the mountains, was canopied in gold and red ; the summits, upon which he rested for a moment before he sank from sight, were 'deep crimson, edged with burnished gold, which melted into a soft and glowing purple as the mountain sloped down to the sea. The sea itself, rippling under the gentle breeze which was bearing us to the land, was glancing and dancing in every conceivable colour, reflected from the sky and hills ; I may almost quote Coleridge :

“ ‘The water, like a witch’s oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.’

The heavens, for a half-circle of the horizon, were a series of fairy landscapes—lakes of amber, dotted with islands of coral, lapping with golden wavelets the dove-coloured shores of some cloudland Hesperides. Good-night, old sun ! And gradually drawing the curtain over the dissolving view, he sank behind a mountain, and the fairy landscapes faded into gloom.”

At nine they tacked and lay off the land ; at midnight it blew strongly from the shore, and by the morning of the 1st of April, when the passengers rose, expecting to see the coast close at hand, were mightily disappointed at being thus April-fooled.

Early in the morning of the 2nd of April the pilot came on board, and slowly they sailed to the entrance to the Bay of Port Chalmers. The bar was crossed, and the ship steadily made her way up the narrow channel, with bush-covered hills on either side, and at eleven o'clock cast anchor in the gunpowder depositing waters, in the pretty bay of, and about two miles from, Port Chalmers. I will conclude this chapter with the last words of young Curzon's diary :

“ April 22nd.—Have just had a glorious breakfast of fresh eggs and beefsteak. We are at anchor in the bay, and, thank heavens, the voyage is over. Exactly 125 days from

port to port. I shall land at Port Chalmers this morning with the Maules, and we intend to have a ramble over the hills and a jolly good dinner on shore. To-morrow I go to Dunedin, and here endeth my diary."

CHAPTER VI.

"*Emilia.* 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man :
 They are all but stomachs, and we all but food ;
 They eat us hungrily, and when they are full
 They belch us."

Othello, Act iii.

Two letters : No. 1 from Arthur Curzon to his brother William.

No. 2 from William Curzon, to his brother Arthur.

No. 1 :

"Hen and Chickens Hotel,

"Birmingham,

"Xmas, 18—.

"MY DEAR OLD BILL,

"I am thinking of you, dear old boy,
 tossing about—or rather, I suppose, being

somewhere in the tropics, you are reclining on the peacefully heaving bosom of the mighty Atlantic (rather shoppy, that, perhaps), and trying to spend a merry Christmas under a vertical sun. *My* Christmas promises to be anything but merry. It is pouring with rain, and I am going to have a very quiet Christmas dinner here in the hotel. I have asked my old friend Sainton (you remember the stage-manager at the Royal here?) and Mrs. Colderson, dear old soul—she's as well as ever, and often talks of you—and one or two others, also old friends; be sure we'll do justice to you in drinking your health. Eh! what? I thought I heard a whispered question wafted across the sea. Well, no, she can't come. She has a dear old aunt who lives somewhere in the north, and has promised to go and eat a quiet (very quiet) Christmas dinner with her this year; the promise was made months and months ago. She is as well as you could wish her to be, and

brighter and prettier, and, what I think very much more to the purpose, a much better actress than ever. Oh! pray don't give that jealous scowl, sir my brother! I am not your rival, though. Well, I often hope and pray, and I know I am, of course, an egotistical ass for saying so, that she is never going to think of me as a nice young man, etc. I do think she is an abominable flirt, and I often tell her I am not worth a cent beside a certain person I know, at which she will toss her pretty little head and say some rubbish about 'Wait till leap-year!' To which I at once replied, flat: 'Look here, Alice, if you think you're going to catch me, you're completely out of it, for I would not take you at a gift, you heartless little baggage; if you can't behave better, ma'am, I won't have you as a member of my company at all.' To which she had the impertinence to reply that I was a conceited ape—that I was not to flatter myself—that I was only of use to keep her

hand in, etc., etc., and she wouldn't go even if I gave her her notice. I can't make her out, but she is the very best and dearest girl in the world, and I would give nearly everything I have to see her the wife of my dear old—— But no matter-r-r-r-r.

“For myself, Bill, I don't think I shall marry. Did you ever hear of a man being fool enough to fall in love with a face? I am such a man, and such a fool; and what makes matters worse, if not very improper, it is with the face of a married woman. Well! a certain face, a pair of tender and beautiful eyes—so gentle, so loving, so trusting—a mouth which speaks without the voice articulating, soft, wavy, golden-brown hair—— Oh, Bill, Bill! your poor brother's mad! He's in love with a face—in love with a face! You at once ask whose? I know her name, but I need not repeat it, even to you. It is enough for me to confess my wickedness and madness to my brother confessor; let it suffice that I saw

her at Margate, and, please heaven ! I shall never see her again. Amen to this sweet prayer, and now to change the subject.

“ I’ve made such a pot of money this year with my company. My season ended a week before Christmas, and I begin again at Belfast, a week hence, with most of the old company. I had three tracts as a Christmas offering ; they were addressed to me in a female’s hand, to the T. R. here ; of course they came from Aunt Dorcas and Uncle Theo.—bless their dear hearts. I am longing to hear of your safe arrival, and to have a mighty letter. If you have kept a diary, do send it to me. And now, good-bye, dear old Bill.

“ Your loving brother,

“ ARTHUR.”

No. 2.

"Maguire's Hotel,

"Dunedin,

"April 10th, 18—.

"MY DEAR OLD BOY AND BROTHEREST OF
BROTHERS,

"Here I am, 'no thanks to all the saints!' I landed on the 2nd of this month, after a most wretched passage of 125 days (*vide* diary enclosed.) I hope you got the first half of said diary, which I sent home to you by *British Nation*. In the first place, I am as well as I can wish to be ; in the second, I need only tell you what I've been about since I landed, as my diary will tell you all up to that date. By the way, isn't it curious that you should have met our captain's (the brute, *vide* diary) wife in Margate? She was always talking of you ; in fact, I am afraid a fine, handsome, blue-eyed, fair-haired scoundrel I know forms too striking a contrast to a carroty cad to whom kind fortune has bound

her. I think it rather *improper* ; but then, you know, *I* am so proper. She knows you are an actor, but does *not* know your *nom de theatre* ; so Mr. Arthur Curzon, perhaps it's as well I kept the name of Mr. Cuthbert from her, for women are but women, and some of them very weak, and some, I think, have but poor taste—I won't mention names, though A is my favourite letter of the alphabet, and E is not, for I should like it changed.

“The Maules and I landed at Port Chalmers, and determined to have a good ramble over the hills about the place, and see what it's like. We climbed one of the hills, and nearly lost ourselves in the bush and scrub ; but when we reached the top we had a glorious view of the bay and the surrounding country. The vegetation seems much the same to me as in England, except the shrubs and the beautiful tree-ferns. After a long ramble we returned to Port Chalmers, which is but a township of wooden houses, and had

dinner at the principal hotel in the place. Wouldst thou know, oh, my brother ! what we had for our feast, in celebration of our landing ? Here is the menu *d la Hiawatha* :

“ Oh, we had the native oyster,
Copper-flavoured, and so nasty—
Potdge made of ancient giblets,
Much preserved, and very tinny ;
Then came fish, quite fresh, and luscious,
With a name I can't remember,
Then a duck with sage and onions—
Onions strong, with mighty flavour,
Peas (not canned) but green and youthful—
Peas with mint, and plenty of them.
Oh, that duck was so delicious !
Then beefsteaks to fill the chinks up,
Steaks well cooked, and juicy—tender,
Steaks with mushrooms spread upon them ;
Then we had delicious custard,
Followed up by cheese of Stilton,
Which, just like the soup and oysters,
Was indeed extremely nasty.
This our menu—this our dinner ;
But I speak not of the drinking,
Which was dear, and most expensive
Bottled ale at two-and-sixpence,
But so good 'twas cheap each bottle,
And I'm sure we drank a gallon.
We enjoyed our dinner muchly,
And were sorry when 'twas ended.

"If all trades fail, Arthur, I mean to turn poet. Surely I am good enough to write rhyming advertisements for cheap tailors—but I forgot—Hiawathian poetry has no rhyme.

"We returned to the ship in the evening, and slept on board for the last time. The following day I went to Dunedin—bag and baggage, by the little steamer *Golden Age*. About seven miles from Port Chalmers up the bay, the water grows too shallow for large ships. From the appearance of the bay, I should imagine that in ages long ago, the eighteen odd miles of water from Port Otago, to two or three miles beyond Dunedin, were an arm of the sea. At the present day, only two miles of sand-hills divide the waters of the bay from the roaring surf of the South Pacific.

"I landed at the pier, and was not mightily prepossessed with my first glimpse of the city of Dunedin. I drove with my traps to Maguire's Hotel, where I have remained since

I landed. I have seen the captain and Mrs. Giles several times. The latter is staying in Dunedin with some friends of the former ; but, from what Mrs. G. told me, I don't think they can be very respectable members of society. I think Giles is behaving himself better now. I am very sorry for the young wife, and fear for her on her voyage home. I have made many inquiries, and formed some pleasant acquaintances. I have been introduced to a Scotch family of the name of Tubstyle. One of the daughters is a great beauty—in fact, the belle of the town—but her eyes are not so beautiful as somebody's, and her—etc., etc., etc.—so I am armed against her charms. In two days I start for Christchurch, where I shall remain some months on a station belonging to a friend of Mr. Tubstyle, after which I shall probably go in for a station on my own account. The Maules have gone to Invercargill, and Blomerskoff has been married to Miss Anderson.

“And now good-bye, old boy. If a certain lady would care to have it, give her my love, etc. Hoping to have another letter from you by the next mail.

“Your loving brother,

“BILL.”

To do James Giles justice, for a time he was sincerely ashamed of himself and of his conduct on board ship, and tried his best to make matters more comfortable for his wife. He was grateful to the passengers for not reporting his conduct to the agents of the owners of the *Camperdaisy*; for although he was part owner himself, such a proceeding would have rendered matters extremely unpleasant for him, both then and in the future. He took his wife to Dunedin, and introduced her to some friends whose acquaintance he had made on some previous visit to the colony, a Mr. and Mrs. Doverook, who immediately invited her to take up her quarters in their

house until her husband's ship was ready to sail again. At Giles's suggestion she accepted the invitation, although she did not much like the appearance either of her host or hostess. Mr. Doverook was tall and thin, with a very cadaverous face—at least, as much of it was so as could be seen through a large beard, which seemed to begin to grow from his eyes, which were retreating, and overshadowed by enormous black shaggy eyebrows. Mrs. Doverook was a showy woman, large, stout, with an immense quantity of "tow" hair on her head and quite a Burlington Arcade of jewellery on her person.

Mr. and Mrs. Doverook and Captain and Mrs. Giles sat down to dinner at six o'clock. The hostess had informed Mrs. Giles that she expected a few friends in the evening, and at her husband's wish Gertrude had put on one of her handsomest dresses, and certainly looked exceedingly pretty. Mrs. Doverook was magnificent in yellow satin, with red poppies in

her dress and in her frowsy hair, and her jewellery was more Burlington-Arcadish than ever. The dinner was plain and substantial. The ladies left the room when the old-fashioned custom of removing the cloth took place, and the gentlemen were left to their whisky and water. Gertrude was somewhat surprised, on entering the drawing-room, to find a number of small tables, with green table-cloths on them, placed about the room.

“Our friends are so fond of cards, dear. It is the favourite vice of the colonies, and the young men do little else at night, when they come up to town. Better that, my dear, than something worse.”

“But do they play for money?” innocently asked Gertrude.

“Oh, yes, dear, else where the excitement? My Julius plays a great deal too much; but he is very lucky—he almost always wins. Will you have some tea, my dear?”

And Gertrude drank her tea, and commenced to wonder.

Presently the room began to fill, and Gertrude whispered her astonishment to her hostess that there were no ladies among the visitors.

“ Ah, my dear,” replied the fair Mrs. Dove-rook, with a shrug, “ the colonial ladies are a queer set. I don’t ask many to *my* house—I prefer the gentlemen. Young Duceacre, the young man in breeches and boots (you must excuse colonial manners, my dear : he’s only just ridden from his cattle station) is the son of Lord Wastland, and owns at least fifteen hundred head of cattle ; but he is such a dreadful young gambler, so much fonder of loo than bulls and cows. Then there’s that young Merlin—do you see him, with fair hair and moustache ?—he has a share in a large run ; but he comes to town every two months with pockets full, and stays a week, and goes back with pockets empty.”

And Mrs. Doverook turned to shake hands with and smile benignly upon a young simpering idiot who had just entered the room—a young man evidently sent out to the colonies because he could do nothing at home—a fair specimen of the ne'er-do-weels who come out to the antipodes in scores, lounge about the towns for a few weeks in their latest Regent Street suits, and spend the few hundreds that have been given to them for a start, in the vain hope of their never being heard of again ; then for a time they go about in a state of semi-starvation, till their relations at home send out sufficient money for their journey back to England, where in due time they arrive with mouths full of words not bad enough for the colonies, and loud assertions that there is no scope at the antipodes either for brains or muscles. Our poor colonies have suffered a good deal by being made into penal settlements ; but that is nothing to the ill of their being used as a sort of Hades for the useless

riff-raff of the superfluous aristocratic population of the old country.

Gertrude looked on in utter bewilderment. The gentlemen were certainly very polite, and showed her much attention. Cards were being played at each table. Brandies and sodas were on a side-board, and almost any liquor that could be asked for. Gold and notes were scattered about, as Gertrude thought, in reckless profusion. Mr. Doverook was playing at one of the tables ; his fairer, if not his better half was standing by, chatting and laughing with the three or four young men with whom her husband was playing loo.

“By Jove, Doverook, your luck beats anything to-night ! You’ve taken every trick, and looted us all,” cried one of the players, and Doverook shovelled a quantity of gold and notes into his bank.

“Ah, my love,” he cried to his wife ; “this will make up for last week’s losses, and buy

the black velvet. 'Pon my soul, Andrews, I lost a thousand last month—did—that's a fact, ain't it, Julia? Funny, isn't it, Mr. Greenledge, my name is Julius, my wife's Julia. I take miss."

And so Gertrude's first evening under the roof of the Doverooks passed away. Giles had played and won heavily. I need not say that the host had done the same, only more so! Days and weeks passed on, and Gertrude was still the guest of the Doverooks; the attractions of their genteel gambling saloon were immensely enhanced by the presence of the beautiful Mrs. Giles. To be sure, at first, Mrs. Doverook was somewhat jealous of the total eclipse of her mature charms by her delicately handsome junior; but when her husband assured her that the captain's wife was really a most useful candle, and lured some of the most beautiful moths to her flame—moths who were singed, and shed their golden plumage most readily into the yawning purse of

the cadaverous Mr. Doverook, Mrs. Doverook became somewhat mollified. As for Gertrude, in her innocence she could at first only think it was a strange life ; presently she began to understand it better, and gradually became aware that she was a guest at a private gambling-hell ; but fortunately for her she never discovered that her noble husband had brought her there as an assistant decoy. Her life was certainly more bearable, for Giles was in luck, and to a certain extent kind to her. One day, after they had been talking about England and old Mr. Totter, he opened his heart and his purse, took out a large bundle of notes, and told his wife to send them to the old man at home. Gertrude was really grateful, and her heart was touched at what she thought was a proof of his affection and returning better nature. She sent the money off at once. This sort of life continued for some weeks. When Gertrude found that any of her host's guests became

rather too pressing in their attentions, her quiet and dignified manner became too much for even the roughest of her admirers, and her name, her beauty, and, strange to say, her purity, became the talk among a certain class of young men in the town. To be sure, on one occasion, after warning a too ardent admirer, she told her husband of his conduct, and Giles quietly followed the hot-blooded young idiot out of the house, and overtaking him, administered a lesson as severe as it was lasting to the young man. Suddenly Giles's visits to the Doverooks' became few and far between ; one evening, when he looked in for an hour, his wife asked him how long it would be before the vessel was ready to sail again ; he answered her evasively, and quickly left the house.

Gertrude was heartily sick of her colonial experience, and longed even for the lonely life on board ship in preference to the odious existence she now had to bear ; moreover, the

Doverooks had grown less and less civil to her of late, and she saw her husband scarcely more than once a week, and then, only for a few moments. He said his business was so pressing—he had no time to come up into the town. Doverook looked at his wife, smiled, and winked under his heavy brow.

The *Camperdaisy* had been in port two months and a half, had taken in cargo and was ready to sail. Gertrude, now very wretched as the guest of the Doverooks, had not seen her husband for ten days. One morning she received a letter bearing the Port Chalmers' post-mark, and addressed in her husband's handwriting.

She opened it and read it—this was at the breakfast-table. Doverook had received a letter, also from Port Chalmers and in the handwriting of Captain Giles. He came to the end of his letter, which appeared to have enclosed some bank notes, and looked up at Mrs. Giles to see how she took the

news which he was aware her letter contained.

Before he had raised his head, Gertrude had fallen to the floor with a thud. She was taken to her room and placed on the bed, and while she is coming back to life, and all its horrors, we will peep at the two letters from that worthy—Captain Giles.

Letter from Captain Giles to his wife :

" Camperdaisy,

" June 20th.

"I have sailed to-day for Hongkong. You will remain where I have left you, until I send for you. Your keep is paid for six months. I will write from the next port.

"JAMES GILES."

Letter from Captain Giles to Julius Doverook :

"DEAR DOVEROOK,

"I have to-day sailed for Hongkong. Minnie Dornton (you remember my

old friend when I was here before, and nearly sent me to ——) has got hold of me again. I can't get rid of her. She has made me take her with me. Take care of Mrs. G. I send you notes for her keep, and will let you have more from Hongkong—she's worth it, and will be useful to you if you get the right side of her.

“ Yours,

“ JAMES GILES.”

Julius Doverook carried Gertrude upstairs to her room, and returned to finish his breakfast.

“ Well, he's a beauty,” he muttered to himself. “ I wonder if Mrs. Giles is really his wife. Jolly bad taste to desert her for that little limb of the fiend, Minnie. Well, it's nothing to me, but Julia will have her fair friend out of this house now in double-quick time, I'll bet.”

And he turned to his *Otago Daily Times*,

and looked at the shipping news to see if any vessel had arrived from England, and studied the various passenger lists, to "spot" the names of those whom he considered eligible single men coming out to the colonies.

Gertrude came to herself, and a miserable self it was. Deserted! At length, feeling better, in the afternoon she rose and dressed herself for dinner. The meal began in dismal silence. Presently Mrs. Doverook fired the first shot.

"So Captain Giles has left for Hongkong?" she said.

"Yes," replied Gertrude; "my husband desires me to stay in Dunedin for a time. I believe, Mr. Doverook, you have had a letter from him to that effect."

"Mr. Doverook, madam, is not the mistress of this establishment, and Mrs. Doverook is not the woman to allow her house to be converted into an asylum for cast-off mistresses."

And the virtuous matron drew herself up

with a sort of shudder, as she hissed out the last word.

"Mistress!" almost screamed poor Gertrude; "Mrs. Doverook, in heaven's name, what do you mean?"

"Mean, my good woman?" replied Mrs. D., "I mean that I am now certain of that which I always suspected, that you are not, and never were, the wife of Captain Giles."

"You cannot—you dare not make such an assertion," cried Gertrude, in amazement at her tormentor's malice. "Why, Mr. Macalister was present at the marriage—the chief officer of the *Camperdaisy*."

"Which has left New Zealand for Hongkong. A very safe witness to call, to be sure, madam."

Here Doverook tried to interfere. Mrs. D. would brook no interruption, and continued:

"My dear Julius, I am a woman, and can see with woman's eyes. Mrs. Giles, since you

choose to call yourself so, I am a Christian lady, and consider charity to be the first principle of my glorious religion. You will finish your dinner and retire to your room. You will be good enough to remain there this evening, and not give my guests the pleasure of your amiable company. To-morrow morning you will kindly pack up your clothes. Captain Giles has insulted us by enclosing in his letter to my husband a paltry ten-pound note, as if we were keeping a common lodging-house for such as you."

"Fifty, my dear, Giles sent," interposed Doverook.

"Silence, Julius," exclaimed Mrs. Doverook. "Giles borrowed forty pounds of me a week ago. This ten pound note will be returned to you, madam; and before twelve o'clock I must beg that my house may be rid of that to which my honest tongue almost refuses to give a name," and she indignantly filled her mouth with pudding, which, I am

glad to say, was so hot that, although in the most delicate and lady-like manner she quickly spit it into her plate, her face grew scarlet, and hastily gulping some sherry, which went down the wrong way, she fell a-choking, that it was quite two minutes before she could recover her breath to wrathfully curse the offending *entremet* and consign it to a place where, probably, it would quickly become baked to a cinder.

When Mrs. Doverook's fit of choking had subsided, Gertrude quietly rose, and addressing the master of the house, said :

"Mr. Doverook, I cannot condescend to answer the wilfully vile statements uttered by your wife, which are as coarse as they are untrue. It has been my misfortune to have become an inmate of a house to the true character of which my eyes have only now been opened."

"What, you——" broke in Mrs. Doverook.

"Silence, woman!" cried Gertrude, turning

on her like a small tiger ; “and do not presume to address me again. Whatever money, Mr. Doverook, may be due to me, you will kindly send to my room. I will ask you, sir, to be good enough to send out for an express waggon, and in half an hour I shall be ready to leave your house,” and before either husband or wife could reply, she had left the room.

Where was she to go at that hour of the evening ? She cared not—to some hotel, she supposed. She had no fear. A courage came to her, born of despair. As she packed her boxes she remembered her old friend William Curzon telling her of his hotel in the town. “Mac—Mac—Macdonald’s; no, that is not it. Maguire’s; yes, that’s it.” And then he had told her it was kept by a kind-hearted Irishman and his still kinder-hearted wife—“such a good motherly woman” he had said. Thither she made up her mind to go. She had finished her packing, when

she heard a knock at her door. She opened it, and found herself face to face with Julius Doverook.

"Mrs. Giles," he began, "your husband and myself have long been friends, and I greatly regret my wife's irritable temper should have caused you so much pain and inconvenience. I will not ask you to stay, for, in the first place, I am convinced you could no longer be at ease for an hour under the same roof with Mrs. Doverook, and, in the second, I am sure, from your speech, to press you to do so would be useless. The express waggon is at the door, and the man is ready to carry down your luggage. In this envelope you will find the notes your husband sent to me this morning, amounting to fifty pounds. I will now bid you good-bye, and at the same time assure you that in me, at least, you will always find a friend," and Mr. Doverook bowed and descended the stairs.

The boxes were carried down and placed

on the waggon. Gertrude walked, and at last reached the hotel. She asked for Mrs. Maguire, and was shown into a snug parlour. When she had explained to the good-natured Irish woman who she was, Mrs. Maguire exclaimed :

“ Bless my soul, Mrs. Giles, is it you ? That boy of my heart, Willie Curzon, often spoke of you. I am glad to see you at last, my dear. Take off your things and sit down.”

Gertrude explained her errand, and Mrs. Mag assured her the best in her house should not be good enough for her. Tea was brought in, and Gertrude had some difficulty in persuading the good-natured lady that she did not like “ the least drop of gin in it.”

The next morning, Gertrude, after consulting with her new friend, determined to seek a situation as governess or nurse in the colonies. With this view, she visited a service agency, and placed her name in the books, giving Mrs.

Maguire as a reference. Two days afterwards, a Mrs. Lawson called at the hotel, and asked for the landlady. It appeared that Mrs. Lawson, sadly in want of a nurse for her three little daughters, applied to the agency I have referred to. The lady was the wife of a run-holder in the Molyneux district, and lived some sixteen miles from the Clutha ferry, on the banks of the river of that name.

When Mrs. Lawson noted that, as qualifications for a situation, Miss Giles (for so Gertrude styled herself in the book) wished for a place either as nurse *or* governess, her delight was great at the offered chance of obtaining a nurse *and* governess in one. She hastened to Mrs. Maguire, whom she knew very well, for her husband always stayed at the hotel whenever he came to Dunedin.

Gertrude was introduced to Mrs. Lawson, who secured her prize most eagerly, at the price of eighty-five pounds a year, for the double qualification. In two days they were to start for the

Molyneux or Clutha district by Cobb's coach. Gertrude arranged to leave the most of her luggage with Mrs. Maguire, taking with her to her new home only a moderately-sized trunk of necessities.

At six o'clock on a Wednesday morning, at the end of June, Gertrude and her new mistress started from Dunedin. Although it was mid-winter, they were able to keep themselves tolerably warm in the coach; and at one o'clock they arrived at the thriving township of Tokomairiro, where they alighted to dine. After dinner, in a different and smaller coach, they resumed their journey southwards. At about four o'clock they came upon a buggy and pair of horses waiting on the road. The buggy contained Mr. Lawson, who was going to drive them to the station, some thirteen miles from the main road. The vehicle was roomy, and the three were quickly seated, and drove off across the ranges. A long, jolting drive it was too, and Gertrude was very glad

when they reached a pretty little cottage, with a veranda surrounding it, which was Mulgarney's Station, and their destination. It was already nearly dark, and a most substantial meal was awaiting them, to which the two did hearty justice. The three little Misses Lawson were introduced to Miss Giles that evening. They were nice children, and, of course, deluged their new governess with a multitude of questions, as is the way with young people. Gertrude was very tired, and was glad to get to bed, where she slept more soundly and happily than she had done for months previously. Mr. Lawson was a handsome man of about five-and-thirty—an easy-going, pleasant-mannered husband, father, and master.

The morning after Gertrude's arrival at Mulgarney's Station broke clear and bright. The air was quite brisk with a slight frost. Miss Giles rose early, and her three little charges were too eager to show her all the sights of

the station. The little house, which was built of wood, and consisted of only one story, stood upon a slightly rising ground. The rushing, snow-fed river Molyneux flowed noisily about a hundred yards from the house. Close by was a small creek, which was bridged by a canoe, by which means "The Island" was reached. "The Island," which was about half a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth, was densely covered with bush and scrub, except here and there where it had been cleared to supply fire-wood. "The Island" was the children's paradise, and they led Gertrude to all their favourite bowers and leafy palaces. Occasionally a little wingless maori hen peeped out to look in astonishment at the early visitors, who immediately started in pursuit of the egg-devouring enemy. They recrossed the creek, and Gertrude took a view of the surrounding scenery. For miles around there was a rolling plain, which swelled into the "ranges"—hills and

valleys, upon which the cattle lived and fattened. In the extreme distance rose the snow-topped Blue Mountains or Southern Alps.

"Now let's take Miss Giles to Lone Rock," cried Maud, the eldest.

They turned, and walked in the opposite direction. They came to another creek which surrounded a bush-covered island ; this creek was very narrow, and they jumped it. In the middle of the island several acres were cleared of bush and undergrowth, and were now a thriving garden. The trees were lofty, and being of a description of pine, were evergreen. The ferns still kept their verdant hue, the fan-tails fluttered and chirped, and the toey, or parson-bird (a black bird with a tuft of white feathers under its throat resembling a parson's bands) whistled its beautiful song. Mid-winter was no mid-winter here. Everything was bright and glorious, and Gertrude began to feel that the world was beautiful after all,

and a sensation of calm serenity, if not of happiness, began to steal over her soul. They strolled on and recrossed the creek at another point, and arrived at Lone Rock—a solitary, massive, and lofty block of stone jutting out of the smooth meadow plain by the river's side. Rough steps had been cut in the irregular sides of the rock, by means of which they were able to reach the summit, which was flat, and of some extent.

When nearly at the top, little Miss Bina, the youngest of the Lawson children slipped, stumbled, and grazed her diminutive shin.

“D—n !” cried the infant.

“What !” exclaimed Gertrude, aghast.

The child repeated the expletive.

Gertrude was thunderstruck. Miss Maud hastened to explain.

“Oh, Bina often says that when she's angry. I used to say it, but mamma said it was a very naughty word. Jane Smith, our nurse

before last, used to say it when she was upset about anything."

On the top of Lone Rock poor Gertrude had to administer her first lecture, and that was on the wickedness of swearing. Poor thing! at least she could speak from experience.

An excellent view was obtained from the top of the rock. To Mrs. Giles's town-bred eyes the country around appeared a sort of fairyland; the birds chirping and whistling in the neighbouring trees; the toey (to which I have before alluded) positively giving, with his flute-note, the first bar or two of "The Standard Bearer" before he broke into his trills and runs. To be sure, in all this peaceful harmony several of the very large hawks, almost like eagles, were sailing about in the air, close to the bush, ready to pounce upon any unhappy inhabitant of that island paradise who foolishly left its overgrowth protection. Hawks of many sorts abound in New Zealand. I once heard a farm-hand declare he recog-

nised his old English friend the "Sparrer-rork."

They had been seated on the summit of the rock some time, and Miss Maud had got Miss Giles to promise that they might, when the weather was warmer, have their lessons there. Suddenly, Miss Theresa, the second Miss Lawson—or, as the family called her, "Tits"—cried out :

"Oh, Miss Giles, we shall be late for breakfast !"

So they descended, and went home as quickly as they could.

Thus Gertrude found a new home, a new life, and new friends. She quickly endeared her little charges to her. Mrs. Lawson was most kind and Mr. Lawson most polite. The poor woman, since she had been a woman, was at rest at last, and even dared to believe herself happy.

CHAPTER VII.

"*Macbeth*. Of all men else, I have avoided thee."

Macbeth.

MR. LAWSON'S run was well stocked with sheep, and cattle, and he was wealthy and prosperous ; about a mile from the house stood the wool-shed, a large, wooden building, where, in due season, the sheep were sheared, and the wool was packed ready to be taken down the river to Port Molyneux by the hind-wheel paddle-steamer *Bombshell*. Near the wool-shed stood the "barracks," the house where the farm-hands, some of the shepherds, and the stockmen lived ; close at hand, again, were the stables, farm-buildings, and the "coräl," into which the cattle were driven at mustering or branding seasons.

At the barracks, the arrival of the pretty new nurse-governess made a great stir, as might be imagined, among a multitude of men who, except the wife of the owner of the station, seldom set eyes upon a woman of any description from one year's end to the other. The verdict among the men in the barracks was that she was "proper"—an expression with, certainly, anything but the dictionary meaning—equal to everything that was nice, taking, and good. The second stockman was a young man of the name of Robert Burrs—about twenty-five years of age. While his companions were talking of the new arrival and singing her praises, Robert, it was soon noticed, never opened his mouth, but smoked on in silence: he was a fine, handsome young fellow—his riding-dress, which he constantly wore, showed off his figure to the utmost perfection; his sole conceit was *the* conceit common to all colonial horsemen, namely, to have his breeches fit without a wrinkle, and

certainly his perfectly formed limbs appeared to have been melted down and poured into his nether garments and his boots; his face was one bright smile; his eyes a laughing blue; his hair clung to his head in fair, close, crisp curls, and a golden down fringed his cheeks, chin and upper lip. A perfect horseman, and a picture in the saddle, was he. In two words, the handsome Robert Burrs had fallen in love at first sight with Mrs. Lawson's pretty new governess.

One morning in the spring, Gertrude had taken her little charges over to the lower island, close to Lone Rock, to spend the day in the bush; the children had built a sort of bower with boughs and ferns, and here they were going to take their lessons and picnic. They lighted a large fire, both for warming and cooking purposes; they enjoyed a very pleasant day, and the little party started on their way home. They reached the creek, and, to their horror and amazement, that which

in the morning had been but a gutter of water, easy to be jumped over, had swollen into a little torrent about waist-deep. What were they to do?

Presently they heard, in the distance, a sweet clear tenor voice, singing the beautiful old ballad, "Sally in our alley."

"Hurrah!" cried Maud, "it's dear old Bob; he'll help us."

"And who's Bob?" asked Gertrude.

"Why, Bob the stockman—haven't you seen him?" replied Maud. "I'm going to marry him, when I'm a big girl. Everybody loves him, he is so good and kind; papa would not lose him for half the station."

At this moment young Burrs came in sight. He was on horseback—on his favourite mare "Becky Sharpe," and the reins were thrown loosely on her neck. Horses, dogs, and children all loved the young fellow. It was sad for him when he first beheld poor Gertrude's pretty face and beautiful eyes.

The children, seeing him, sent up a shrill shout; Bob rode towards them.

"Oh, Bob, dear Bob," they cried in chorus, "look how the creek is swollen!—how shall we get over?—do help us."

"I'll take you over and give you a ride too—that is, if Miss Giles will allow me."

Gertrude thanked him, and he rode his horse across the swollen creek. He stooped and lifted the children into the saddle in front of him, and "Becky Sharpe" carried them, one by one, to the mainland.

"And now, Miss Giles, if you will allow me."

Bob dismounted, and Gertrude permitted him to help her on to the saddle, where he half held her, as he walked beside the mare and through the rushing water, and landed her on dry land.

"Oh, Mr. Burrs," cried Gertrude, as he took her off the horse, "how dreadfully wet you are; you should not have waded through."

"It's not of the least consequence," he replied; "I am so glad I happened to be passing."

And in his dripping garments, he led his mare and walked by her side, drinking in delirium as he talked with his idol, until they arrived at the house, when Gertrude thanked him again, and went in with the children.

Poor, handsome boy! Your life is shadowed from henceforth—no future joys and happiness will ever obliterate from your heart the memory of your first love.

Often in the evening Bob (accidentally, of course) met Gertrude and the children returning from their walk; Gertrude liked the good-looking, bright young fellow: there was an honesty and genuineness about him to which, except in the case of Willie Curzon, she was utterly unused in the opposite sex. He was amusing, and the children quite adored him; he once took them for a "ride"

in a canoe all round the island, and the poor fellow thought he was in paradise.

Gertrude had been with the Lawsons for about four months, when Mr. Lawson gave a ball in the wool-shed. All the run-holders and farmers within twenty miles were asked, and a number of his friends from the Molyneux district around "the Ferry." Great preparations had been made, and the affair promised to be a great success. Robert Burrs, who was a most respectable young man and well educated, and held also, as stockman, a responsible position on the station, besides being a great favourite with Mr. Lawson, was bidden to the ball. I need not speak of the pains the young man took to make a presentable appearance, and how his heart beat at the thought of clasping his beloved Miss Giles in his arms during the mazy waltz.

The night of the ball came; it was a glorious summer evening. The guests arrived

in every description of vehicle, and upon various kinds of beasts. Musicians were hired from "the Ferry"—a pianist and a violinist—and presently "all went merry as a marriage bell."

The evening was wearing away, and Gertrude thought she never had enjoyed anything in her life so much before: she had danced several times with young Burrs, who was in the seventh heaven of happiness. After a long waltz with her, he proposed that they should stroll outside the building for a while in the cool air. Gertrude consented, for she liked the society of the young man, as she had before found pleasure in the company of William Curzon. They had not walked far when she discovered the misery that was in store for the young fellow; he was beating about the bush, unable to find a commencement to his "speech of fire." Suddenly Gertrude discovered his drift, and at the thought almost gave a groan; she quickly

recovered herself, and determined to save the young man the pain of declaring himself only to be so entirely and hopelessly undeceived.

“Robert,” she began—in common with every one about the place she called him by his Christian name—“I have no friend to confide in, and I have a secret ; I don’t know why I tell it to you, but you seem to be a friend to me. I am not *Miss Giles* ; I am the wife of a Captain Giles, of the ship *Camperdaisy*, and he has left me.”

Robert started from her with a cry.

“Married ! married ! Impossible ! Oh, *Miss Giles*, I can’t believe it !”

“Hush, hush !” she replied. “When I was left in Dunedin utterly without friend or adviser, I unexpectedly found both in Mrs. Maguire, of Maguire’s Hotel. I was forced to seek a situation, and at the suggestion of my new friend, to better my chance of being quickly engaged, I removed my wedding-ring

from my finger and changed the 'Mrs.' for 'Miss.'"

"If I only had known it before!" the poor young man groaned to himself.

"And now, Robert, let us return to the wool-shed," said Gertrude; and they once more joined the dancers.

Robert, having conducted his partner to a seat, rushed from the ball-room and wandered for a long time over the ranges, half mad with a feeling of utter despair. The morning light broke over the distant hills. He returned, changed his clothes, took a plunge into the icy creek, and prepared for his daily work on the ranges.

Gertrude's pleasure of the evening was gone, and her old sadness returned to her. She scarcely slept when she retired to bed.

The next morning a large party assembled in the little parlour of the station-house. Gertrude made her appearance, paler than usual. Mr. Lawson had noticed his favourite's

(Bob's) devotion to his children's governess, and as he liked Miss Giles very much, he hoped and wished that a match might spring from their intimacy.

Mr. Lawson began kindly to chaff Gertrude at the breakfast-table about her dancing so often with Robert ; but noticing her nervous look and crimson face, he desisted, secretly hoping that he recognised the signs of the love he wished to grow in her heart for his young favourite.

It was a merry party at breakfast that morning. The table groaned with the good things upon it. Mutton-hams—not the mutton-hams of Scotland, which are generally made from the limbs of “braxy” sheep, that have been killed only “to save their lives”—but fine legs of well-fed sheep—legs that have been weeks in pickle, and then thoroughly smoked in the fumes of totara wood. Mutton-hams, juicy steaks, the native wood-pigeon, caw-caws (almost equal to partridges), a

wonderful pie made of swamp turkey, the flesh of which resembles hare, formed part of the matutinal feast.

Mr. Lawson's young brother Fred had come up from an office in Dunedin for the ball, and an odious, greedy little prig he was. He had been born in the colony, and was not a pleasant specimen of a youthful colonist—an overgrown *enfant terrible*. He had feasted surely to repletion, but once more sent his plate to be replenished with ham.

“What, more?” exclaimed his brother.

“British lion must be fed, Jack,” returned the greedy imp.

“British lion be hanged!” replied Mr. Lawson. “Colonial whelp you mean,” and raised a laugh at the young man's expense.

On Sundays Miss Giles used to take her young charges—who by this time loved their governess with a true childish devotion—to “the Island.” There she would read to and play with them, and there, too, almost

invariably, Robert Burrs would join them. Those Sunday afternoons had been an elysium to poor Robert; and Gertrude, who really liked the young man, enjoyed his society, and did not fear to show that she did so. No wonder, then, that Robert indulged in delicious day-dreams during his daily rides over the ranges; and when he halted to devour his frugal lunch and smoke his post-prandial pipe, mighty and glorious were the air-castles he built, as he fondly dreamed that one day his divinity would be all his own.

Oh, bitter and cruel was his awakening! She belonged to another—that other had deserted her! Was it possible that anybody lived who would own such a heaven-sent treasure and not appreciate the blessing? He had set up his idol and worshipped it; his idol was not *his* idol; another possessed his god; it was no longer his; and so on and so on.

The ball had taken place on Wednesday,

and Sunday arrived. Little had been seen of the second stockman since the ball ; and on the afternoon of the seventh day Gertrude, with the children, as usual, visited "the Island." They had not long been there, but long enough for the girls to begin to wonder why their playmate did not come, when

"The old, old simile again,
The moth that round the candle flies,
Loves it too well to heed the pain,
Flutters too near, and then it dies,"

and, as usual, he appeared upon the scene. Poor fellow ! he tried to look as if nothing had happened, which was a miserable failure. However, Gertrude pretended to take no notice of his confusion, and chatted with him as he played with the children, who could not make out what was the matter with their old friend and playmate.

The afternoon passed away, as Sunday afternoons in fine weather usually passed away, and Robert went home to the barracks

miserably happy—happy that he had basked in the sunshine of the glorious god he had himself created—miserable in the knowledge that his idol was owned, though never worshipped, by another.

About this time Gertrude received a scrawled letter from her father. In it she learned that the excellent vendor of cat's meat—the husband of her old and early friend, Mrs. Bulger—was dead, and that the widow and one of her sons had sold the business, and had gone to live in some village a long way from London. Gertrude had written to her old friend since her arrival in the colony, but had received no answer to her letter, for the very sufficient reason that Mrs. Bulger could scarcely read or write.

Another item of news of considerable importance was the announcement of the death of Mrs. Rorman, the mother of Gertrude's husband. The wicked old woman had passed away in spirit from this earth (I

believe it was gin). Shakespeare says that "water is a sore decayer of your dead body," certainly Mrs. Rorman's corpse had little excuse for speedy corruption. Old Totter himself was fairly well, and fairly to do. His letter was very short. Gertrude, of course, wished to write to her old friend and nurse, but as Mrs. Bulger had flown into the country, leaving no address, this was impossible. Six months had passed since Gertrude had arrived at the station. She had certainly begun to taste

"The fat weed
That roots itself at ease on Lethe's wharf,"

which, I humbly take it, means the lotus plant of forgetfulness, and prefer the reading of "roots" to the more common "rots" of most Shakespearean commentators. Her life, if not happy, was utterly peaceful; and, but for the misery she saw only too plainly written in the face of her friend Robert

Burrs, her existence would have been supremely tranquil, at all events.

One day Mrs. Lawson, when they were alone, handed Mrs. Giles her first salary for the six months—forty pounds ten shillings. Gertrude determined to send the sum home to her old father by the next mail, but she did not. It was on the Sunday following the payment of her first salary that, immediately after an early dinner, the day being extremely hot, laden with books, etc., Gertrude and her charges sought the grateful shade of one of the bowers on “the Island.” They did not expect their Sunday companion for some time, as they had gone out so much earlier than usual. They were comfortably seated, and Gertrude had finished some Biblical story she had been telling the children, and, at Miss Maud’s request, had begun to sing one of their favourite songs to them. She had come to the end of the first verse, when she heard a well-remembered voice utter the words :

"Very pretty, Gertrude dear ; I never knew you sang before."

And looking up, she uttered a scream as she saw the hateful figure of the brutal Dick Rorman standing before her. Little Miss Maud was the first to speak.

"What do you want here, man ? You go away, and don't come here again to frighten our Gerty."

Rorman replied :

"Don't be afraid, pretty one ; Gerty, as you call her, and I are very old friends. She'll have nothing to fear from me if she behaves herself, nor you children neither."

Gertrude stammered out :

"What do you want here, Rorman ? What have you come for ?"

"I want you, and I have come for you," replied the ruffian. "All the way from England have I come for you, and this time you won't escape me. Work enough I've had to find you. I landed at Dunedin three months

ago, and made every inquiry about you, but could only learn that Jim Giles had sailed from New Zealand with a woman, and that that woman was not his wife. At last, a fortnight ago, I met a young fool who had lately arrived from England with a lot more money than brains, and one night he took me to a private gambling-hell. In the course of conversation a young man, in the midst of his play, asked, 'Where is Mrs. Giles, who used to stay with you, Mrs. Doverook? She was one of the prettiest women in Dunedin. I heard she had left you.'

" 'My house, sir,' replied the rubicund matron, 'is at least respectable, and I am only sorry I harboured a creature of that sort for a single day under my roof.'

" Well, my dear, I was not deceived by the harridan's innuendo, and could see at a glance you had been too good for her purpose; so I set to work to think. At last, I thought to myself, service would be just the thing she

would seek, so I visited all the agencies, and, after some trouble found the nest of my bird, and here I am."

"And now you are here, Rorman, the best thing you can do is to go back again. I am among friends who will protect me from your brutality and annoyance," replied Gertrude, very quietly.

"Fudge !" returned Rorman. "My plans are laid better this time. No curly-haired, blue-eyed fool is at hand to foil me, and now, at this moment, you will come with me."

"You don't frighten me so easily this time," replied Gertrude. "Run, Maud, run for assistance ;" and the little girl prepared to fly towards the canoe.

"Come back, my child !" cried Rorman, snatching up little Bina, the youngest, who began to scream lustily and loudly. "Come back, or I pitch your little sister into the river !"

And Maude came trembling back, and

began crying, in which she was soon accompanied by little Tits, and a nice catterwauling the trio made.

“Quick, now, quick! before those howling brats bring some one here with their infernal noise. I have cut the canoe adrift, so it will give trouble either to rescue you, or for you to escape. I have a roomy boat tied under this tree, and with care we will quickly swing down with the current to the sea. Come!”

“Never!” Gertrude firmly replied. “You cowardly fool, assistance is nearer than you think. Quick, then, and get away before you are discovered and punished as you deserve.”

Gertrude was but bragging. She knew no one was at hand, but trusted to the effect of a little braggadocio upon the cowardly hound before her.

“If that be so,” he cried, “I’ll lose no time!” and he rushed to her, to seize her and carry or drag her to the boat.

This time she was no terror-stricken girl, but fought and struggled with him like a tigress, screaming all the time :

“ Robert ! Robert ! Help ! help ! ”

Her cry was answered. Once again a fair and curly stranger came to her assistance. The muscular form of Robert Burrs appeared upon the scene. The water was dripping from him, for he had swam the creek. In a moment he had closed with Rorman. They struggled and wrestled with each other for some seconds, when it became only too apparent to Gertrude that her enemy was the stronger of the two. Suddenly the combatants fell, and Robert was undermost. With a shout of triumph, Rorman plucked something from the breast of his coat, while with his other hand he pinioned his adversary to the ground by the throat.

Gertrude saw the glitter of steel as he raised a huge blade in the air, ready to be plunged into the poor young man's body

beneath him. Swift as lightning, Gertrude had darted forward, and the next moment the knife was in her hand.

“Off! off!” she screamed, “or I’ll plunge it into your heart!”

At the same moment Robert seized the opportunity, and recovered himself from Rorman’s grasp. Robert now tried hard to hold his adversary, who was bent on freeing himself from his antagonist, in order to make his escape. The cries of Gertrude and the children had attracted the notice of one of the men about the place who had been wandering by the creek. He had also swam across the stream, and hastened to the spot from whence the screams proceeded. Rorman, seeing the additional assistance at hand, with a vigorous effort, freed himself from his antagonist, and in two bounds had reached the boat, loosened it, and was quickly being borne down the rushing stream of the Molyneux.

Gertrude fell to the earth like one dead.

The canoe was found stranded some way down the creek. It was quickly brought to its original position, and Gertrude and the children were taken home to the station.

Before the canoe had been brought back and fastened in its place, Gertrude had come to herself. Robert had never left her. At first he thought she was dead ; he chafed her hands, and moistened her lips with water from the river. The three children were silent now, and stood shocked and trembling, thinking their dear friend and governess would never return to life again. Gertrude opened her eyes and saw Robert standing over her.

“Is he gone ? Is he gone ?” she murmured ; and then, recollecting all that had happened, she continued : “Oh, Robert ! I don’t know what to tell you about that dreadful fiend. Are you hurt ?”

“No, no !” replied the young man. “But tell me, is he—is he your——?”

"Husband? No. He is a devil in human shape—a fiend sent upon this earth to ruin—to kill me. Robert! after to-day I may never see you again. My poor boy! I know your friendship for, your kindness to me. God bless you, Robert—God bless you! I am better now, and can walk by myself. Whatever happens in the future, I shall ever remember your kind and faithful heart."

"Oh, Gertrude, Gertrude!" broke in Robert.

"Hush! hush!" returned Gertrude, "you must not call me by that name, Robert."

By this time they had crossed the canoe-bridge, and the governess and her charges quickly arrived at the house.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawson were "down at the ferry," or, in other words, on the previous Friday had started to stay for a few days with some friends who lived at the Clutha township.

Evening came and darkened into night;

the children were put to bed and the station was at rest. The moon was nearly full, the air was perfectly calm and still, only filled with the delicious warbling, bubbling music of the swiftly flowing river. Quite noiselessly the door of the station-house opened. "Thunder," a huge kangaroo hound belonging to Mr. Lawson, was lying in the veranda in front of the door; he half rose with a muttered growl, but seeing a female figure issue from the door, the growl ceased, and a heavy "whack, whack," upon the wooden floor of the veranda, from the dog's tail, threatened to rouse the household. The muffled figure stooped and kissed the animal's head, and the dog rose as if to follow.

"Lie down! lie down, good dog!" whispered Gertrude, for she of course it was. "Go to bed! go to bed!" and the animal stood watching wistfully the retreating figure.

The fact of the matter was this: Gertrude

had made up her mind to run away from the station—a place now rendered hateful to her after the unexpected appearance of her arch-enemy.

“Oh!” she cried to herself, “he is here still—he may be watching for me now! Let me go! let me go!”

And that night, when all was quiet, she rose and prepared for her night-march. Her aim was to reach Port Molyneux, where she would be able to get a small sailing trader to take her round to Port Chalmers. Once there she would take the first ship for England. She had money, nearly a hundred pounds—fifty pounds she had received from Mr. Dove-rook, and her six months' salary, besides a few pounds she had previously, and which were not yet spent.

Gertrude had no idea of the way she was to go across the ranges to the main road, a track difficult enough to follow in broad daylight; she had heard that a path ran beside

the river, all the way to the ferry, a long winding path of twelve or fifteen miles. But oh! the dread of living another day at the station in the constant fear of meeting that dreadful man—that desperate devil that would stand at nothing, not even murder, to work his will.

Her mind once made up, she prepared and started. I will not attempt to follow her step by step. She reached "Duck Pool," about two miles from the station, where she had to jump a small creek; the moon made the night as bright almost as day, and she easily leaped over the little stream, and walked on and on. She had proceeded about eight miles, and was beginning to congratulate herself upon her easy walk, but her difficulties were then beginning.

Constantly she had to walk up steep hills to avoid the marshy flat beside the river; she was beginning to feel weary, but dared not own it to herself, and plodded on and on.

The marshes became larger and larger, and often she had to make a detour of three miles to get round a swamp but a hundred yards in width.

At last, at about six o'clock in the morning, it was broad daylight, she arrived at the edge of a huge swamp, which ran for at least three miles up a valley, and it was quite a mile to the opposite side. Weary, worn out, her heart failed her at last, and she sank to the ground and burst into a passion of sobs. She did not remember how long she remained there—it might have been a few minutes or half an hour; she suddenly thought she heard a footstep, she looked up and saw a man standing by her side. She screamed and buried her face in the grass, exclaiming :

“Rorman ! Rorman, have mercy, have mercy.”

A kindly voice replied :

“Don’t be afraid, Mrs. Giles; I have followed

you all the way from the station, to see that you came to no harm."

"Robert!" cried Gertrude, "Robert, is it you? Oh, good, kind, faithful heart, heaven alone can reward you! I was at the last gasp almost. Oh, how can I cross this dreadful swamp?"

Robert tried a long time to persuade her to return to the station, but in vain. At length, finding she would not give up her plan of making her way to the coast, he set about trying how he could get her across the swamp. She asserted her determination of attempting to cross on foot. They started. The sandy bottom prevented their feet from sinking far into the ooze, though, of course, they were ankle deep in mud. They had crossed a third of the swamp, when the character of the ground changed, and they were obliged to come to a standstill. Fortune favoured them.

Where did it come from? Who had brought it there? Had some kindly flood

deposited it in the middle of the swamp to help some forlorn traveller of the future? A long plank was lying close beside where they were standing on a dry "tussock," Robert was delighted at their good fortune, and taking up the plank, he used it as a bridge from "tussock" to "tussock," and, by this means they reached the other side of the swamp. This was their last great difficulty, and they soon arrived at the ferry. Robert "cooey-ed" for the ferry-boat, and they were presently in the township.

The young stockman persuaded his poor companion to go to the house of an acquaintance of his own to have her clothes dried and take food and rest. She complied. After six hours' rest she rose, and told her faithful follower she was ready to start for the port, Fortunately the hind-wheel paddle-steamer was that day to start for Port Molyneux and, at Robert's suggestion, she determined to continue her journey by that means. He

conducted her to the port and saw her safely on board a little trading vessel on her way to Port Chalmers. He then said farewell to her, and, with heavy heart, made his way back to the station.

Meanwhile, everyone at the station was scandalized at the elopement, but the climax of the scandal was completely spoiled by the return of Robert Burrs. Robert arrived at mid-day, and the Lawsons in the evening of the same day. The young man requested an interview with his master immediately on his return, and told him all that had occurred, and a great deal that Gertrude had told him about her past. The Lawsons were much grieved at the loss of their excellent governess and friend, and the children were almost inconsolable. However, Gertrude had gone, and, after a time, like all else in this most transient existence, was forgotten.

Mrs. Giles took passage by a ship which was to leave for England a week after Ger-

trude's return to Port Chalmers. She paid £45 for a first-class passage, and, by arrangement, lived on board the ship until she started. The voyage home to England was long, and although uninteresting, not unpleasant. The Thames was reached at last, and Gertrude landed and quickly drove to Miranda Lodge. She found old Totter in tolerable health and poor in pocket. He received his daughter with a grunt, and asked her where her husband was. So Gertrude was once more at home, and her old life seemed to return to her again. The sewing-machine was oiled and made ready for work, and Mrs. Giles was face to face with her lonely and hapless existence; more lonely, more hapless, now that she had no kindly hearted cats'-meat merchant's wife to help her to bear her troubles.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red.”

HOOD : *Song of the Shirt.*

GERTRUDE once more settled down to her homely work. She called upon her old employers, who were quite ready to supply her with as much to do as she could manage by herself, and Miranda Lodge became a regular workshop.

And now to return to some old friends.

Arthur Cuthbert had been getting on famously in his profession. The only thorn in his side was the manifest predilection shown for him by Alice Erskine. Oh ! how he wished he could send out a word of hope in that direction to his dear brother in New

Zealand ! He talked about him constantly—how he had bought a run, and was getting on splendidly ; but it had no effect upon the heart of the fair Alice, which, alas ! was already given to William's brother.

About three months after Gertrude's arrival in England, Arthur received a long letter from his brother, from which I may as well reproduce one or two extracts.

The letter had been written two or three months after Gertrude's departure from the colonies, begins by describing the writer's success as a run-holder. He had taken a friend into partnership, and bought a fine cattle and sheep run, and was getting on very well. It appears from the letter that William Cuthbert had visited Dunedin in January, and had stayed at Maguire's Hotel. From the worthy Mrs. Mag. he learned all about Gertrude Giles—how she had been deserted by her husband, and turned out of the house of the disreputable

Doverooks, and had found shelter and kindness with Mrs. Mag.; how she was now governess and nurse at a station on the Molyneux, and, according to last accounts received, very happy and comfortable. Evidently, at the time Curzon's letter was written, neither the writer nor Mrs. Maguire were aware of Gertrude's flight. After giving him so much news, the letter continued—"And now, as the mail does not go out for a fortnight, and as I must remain in town for quite a month, I will put away my paper for a few days, and then, perhaps, I shall have more news."

The remainder of the letter is dated ten days later :

"News indeed I have for you. Captain Giles has returned to the colony in the *Camperdaisy*, and there has been a fine row ! I hear that a few days before the return of the captain, the Doverooks' hell was bursted up. Mrs. D. had been arrested for robbing a new chum of a thousand pounds in notes. The

robbery was proved, and the beautiful lady was sentenced to penal servitude for heaven knows how many years. Of course, Doverook was inconsolable. His house was under police surveillance and his trade was stopped. However, I think he made a pot of money. You must know that Doverook's house is built on the summit of a precipitous cutting which forms a street in the town. The house is reached by a steep wooden staircase, at the top of which is a little platform surrounded by rails. Immediately on Giles's arrival, he (Giles) went to the Doverooks' house, where he had left his wife, and where he expected to find her. As far as has been found out, the captain arrived at Doverooks' at about eight eight o'clock in the evening, in a state of semi-intoxication. What occurred is not known precisely; but it is supposed that the interview ended in a quarrel, in which the master of the house sought to expel his unwelcome visitor. Anyhow, at dawn of day a policeman

found the worthy Doverook lying in the street stone dead, with his neck broken, having evidently fallen or been thrown from the top of the cutting. On further examination, Captain Giles was found nearly at the foot of the steep staircase, bleeding, and apparently also dead, he as well evidently having fallen or been pushed down the steps. He was taken to the hospital, and was found to be still alive, and, if I am not unchristian in the remark, I am sorry to say is so up to the present time. I obtained Mrs. Giles's address from Mrs. Maguire, and wrote to her about her husband's accident, but have had no time to receive an answer from her. I must now end, as the mail is going out in half an hour."

With many messages, etc., the letter ends.

One message was—"Kind remembrances to Miss Erskine and Mrs. Colderson."

Arthur had noticed in the monthly letter he received from his brother, that the tender messages for, and speeches about, the fair

Alice, were of late becoming fewer and colder. As in a lady's letter, the postscript to the above was in Arthur's eyes the most important part of the whole. It ran :

"P.S.—I must tell you, Arthur, that I am constantly visiting the Tubstyles. Miss Fanny Tubstyle is, as I told you before, the belle of Dunedin, but her sister, Miss Annie, is my favourite—one of the nicest girls I think I ever met. The T.s, all of them, are very kind to me, and, whenever I am in town beg I will make their house my home."

"Ho ! ho !" said Arthur to himself, as he read the postscript. "So Master Bill has found his heart again. Well, 'off with the old love and on with the new' ! It won't break Alice's heart—that's for certain."

Arthur read his brother's letter to Miss Erskine, and was amused at her unrestrained delight at hearing the postscript.

"He'll be married in six months," cried Alice.

"And you're jealous," returned Arthur.

"Fudge and fiddlesticks!" she replied.

"Well, you've lost the only chance of getting married that you are ever likely to have," said Arthur. "There are not many men who would undertake the charge of such a thoughtless, capricious piece of goods."

"Sir!" cried Alice, in mock dignity.

"Take Rosalind's advice to Phœbe, Alice: 'Sell when you can, you're not for all markets.'"

"Oh, you brute, Arthur," she returned, flinging her Shakespeare at him, out of which she had been studying. "It would serve you right to marry you myself, and make you live in perpetual punishment ever afterwards."

"Oh, there would be no doubt about the punishment, but it would never be perpetual: whoever married you would be dead in a month, worried into an early grave."

And so these two would go on sparring—a very clear case of “she would, and he wouldn’t.”

Arthur was certainly very fond of Alice Erskine, but loved her with the affection of an elder brother, and never dreamed of experiencing any other feeling towards her. Her bright, happy nature amused him; her great talent as an actress excited his admiration. He was somewhat disappointed that his brother’s love for Alice had died, or, after her manifest indifference to it, had been eclipsed by the antipodean rival. Nothing would have delighted him more than to have brought about a marriage between the two. As for himself, he was perfectly heart-whole; to be sure, he occasionally grew serious as his remembrance called to his mind a pale, frightened face he had once seen at Margate—but it was a memory, no more. Mrs. Colderson once took him severely to task on the subject of Alice.

"My dear boy," she had said, "the girl loves you devotedly; it is quite time you settled; you're suited to each other exactly; why don't you marry her?"

"I will tell you once and for all, mother" (many of her young professional friends were allowed to call her by that endearing term), "because I do not love her, and she, knowing that, would never marry me."

"Oh, bosh and nonsense!" replied Mrs. Colderson. "Women ain't fools, nor particular either, if they have the chance of getting a good man for a husband. Take my advice——"

And Arthur, interrupting her, begged her never to allude to the subject again, and, however much she thought of and prayed for the match, she never did speak of it again.

To return to Gertrude and her old father. Months had passed since the daughter had returned home, and nothing had been heard

of or from Captain Giles. Money was very scarce with them, for Gertrude's sewing-machine earnings were but small, and old Totter, who was now more tyrannous and exacting than ever, would not be satisfied with ordinary plain living, and, I am sorry to say, his intemperate habits were growing upon him.

One day Gertrude determined to visit the office of the owners of the *Camperdaisy* and make inquiries. This she did, stating that she was the wife of Captain Giles. The young clerks in the office looked at each other, smiled, and almost imperceptibly winked, and told her that the *Camperdaisy* had returned to England—had been brought back by another captain—and that Giles had been left in the hospital in Dunedin, dying or dead.

The wife returned to her father almost stupefied with the news: not that she could pretend any sorrow for the man, but it was so

sudden and unexpected. "Was he dead?" and her lips almost murmured the word "Release!" Her father treated the news very differently. He stormed at his poor daughter, and swore at her, telling her that if she had behaved herself properly as a wife, all would have been different, and he would have been saved from the workhouse; and he hobbled out of the house to the neighbouring tavern, to spend the half-crown he had forced his daughter to give him on some or other pretext, and late that evening hobbled home again in a state of maudlin intoxication.

Gertrude bore up well and long, but gradually began to feel that her health was giving way. She still worked on; but her worn face and hollow eyes told a sad tale, or rather, would have done so, but there was no one to tell it to. How she longed for her kind friend Mrs. Bulger!

One evening—her old father had been out all day—as Gertrude was sitting dreaming

over a cup of tea, Totter staggered in, and told her to get her things together within a week, and be ready to go into lodgings, as he had sold the house as it stood. It was a new trouble, but, after all she had gone through, Gertrude had little heart left to grieve over it. The next day cheap lodgings were found, and the week soon passed.

It was the evening of the day before they were to leave Miranda Lodge, and father and daughter were sitting over their too frugal meal. Suddenly the door opened and James Giles walked into the room. Gertrude slightly screamed, and scarcely knew whether it was her husband or his ghost.

“ Well, Gertrude—well, old ’un—taken you by surprise, eh?” was his salutation, as he threw himself into the old arm-chair by the fireplace. “I’ve just landed. Your friend Doverook— By the way, Gatty, get out the old man’s whisky-bottle. My mouth’s as dry as tinder.”

Old Totter had risen at the captain’s en-

trance, and was fussing about the place in high glee at the return of the wanderer. He now hastened to the cupboard and produced the liquor.

Giles continued :

“Your friend Doverook has paid dearly for turning you neck and crop out of the house in Dunedin. His wife, or rather widow, has got penal servitude for the best part of her life, and——”

“Is he dead, then ?” broke in Gertrude.

“Dead !” replied Giles. “Dead, yes, and rotten. We had a great row, we were both in liquor, and the fool tried to throw me down those infernal steps. He certainly succeeded ; but in the scuffle on the little platform it was a toss-up which of us fell under or over the guard-rail. I don’t know whether I threw him over or under the rail into the street below, and in doing so slipped and fell down those steps, or whether he watched me down the steps and lost his balance, and fell after-

wards. I remember nothing more till I found myself, some days after, in the Dunedin Hospital. I was there for a long time, and when I came out I was taken into custody. They tried to make a case of manslaughter against me, but there was no evidence, and being a merchant captain and tolerably well known in the town, I was supposed to have a good character—anyhow, I got off. I found my ship taken from me ; so, after finding out all about you, and that you had vanished from the station, and had probably taken passage back to England, I determined to set off homewards myself. I got the charge of a vessel to China, and from thence paid my passage in a sailing vessel, and came home.”

Giles was very angry when he heard old Totter had sold the house, and the day after his arrival they all went into lodgings.

The captain was not possessed of much money just then, but was going to sell his share in the *Camperdaisy*. This he did, and

for three months he remained in England, sometimes staying at the lodgings occupied by his wife and father-in-law, sometimes no one knew where.

During these three months Gertrude's health entirely gave way, and she gradually sickened for typhoid fever. This was a cause of the greatest annoyance to Giles, who had obtained the command of a barque which was shortly to start for Australia, and had expressed his intention of taking his wife with him. Doubtless, the dreadful prospect of a second voyage with her husband hastened the advance of the disease.

The day arrived for the sailing of Giles's ship. In the afternoon the captain arrived at the lodgings in a close carriage. He was slightly the worse for drink. He entered his wife's room, where she was lying on the bed. Totter was sitting by her side, and she seemed hardly conscious of anything around her. The old man was really frightened—to lose her

would mean to him the workhouse. Two days previously the doctor had been sent for to see Gertrude. He came, and shook his head, and said he could give no opinion on the case at present ; it might be small-pox, scarlet fever, typhoid, or even measles for which she was sickening ; he would call again in two days.

Giles entered the room, and immediately announced his intention of taking his wife on board that very afternoon. Even Totter could not stand this ; he swore at the captain, and declared he should not touch her.

“Bosh ! you old fool. The voyage will do her all the good in the world ; it is the very thing she wants. I’ve got a nice close carriage for her, and we’ll make her comfortable ; so just get hold of her dresses, and pitch them into a sheet, and do them up. They’ll do till we get on board.”

Totter still protested, and Gertrude ap-

peared to take no notice of what was going on.

"The fact of the matter is, Totter," Giles said at last, "you're afraid, if I take Gertrude, you will lose your bread-winner. So you will, but I've provided for that. Here are fifty pounds in notes; that will last you a year, at least. By that time we shall have returned, or, if not, you will have heard from us."

Totter took the money, and his objections to moving his daughter became slighter, and he began to collect her clothes in a sheet. Meanwhile, Giles took some blankets, and proceeded to wrap them round his wife, who submitted quite passively; all was ready, and Giles was about to lift Gertrude's shrunken form, preparatory to carrying her down to the brougham below.

There was a rap at the door. Before they could say "Come in," a stout, elderly gentleman had entered the room—he was the doctor.

“What’s this? What’s this?” he cried.

Giles began blusteringly to explain.

“What?” cried the doctor, “attempting to remove the patient! Heavens and earth! it seems I have but just arrived in time. Put her back on the bed instantly.”

Giles began to swagger, saying she was his wife, and he meant to do as he pleased.

“I am her husband,” said he. “And——”

But he was stopped by the doctor, who, in some anger, broke in :

“Husband be d——! I forbid her removal, and that’s an end of it.” And he went forward and examined his patient. After a short time, he continued: “Just as I expected—typhoid fever, and a very bad case it promises to be.” He turned to Giles, and said: “You say you are her husband. You may thank me that you will not be imprisoned for manslaughter. Had you carried your intention into execution, you would deliberately have killed your wife. You say

your ship sails to-day ; if you are determined to sail with her, take leave of your wife now, for it is more than probable you will never see her again."

Giles uttered an oath and left the room, calling Totter out with him. Presently there was a slight scuffle heard on the landing, and old Totter's voice crying :

"No, no ! You shan't have them. I'll die first."

"Then go, and be d——" was the reply, and Totter returned to his daughter's room.

It appeared that Giles, baulked of taking his victim on board, had attempted to get part of the fifty pounds back from old Totter. He failed, and went off to the ship by himself. The name of his ship was the *Proud Janet*.

CHAPTER IX.

"Othello. Oh, my soul's joy,
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd Death !
And let the labouring barque climb hills of seas
Olympus-high ; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven. If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy."

Othello, Act ii.

ABOUT three months after Arthur Cuthbert had received the letter from his brother, with the postscript which had so much interested him, another letter arrived from William, announcing his engagement to be married to Miss Annie Tubstyle. This piece of news neither surprised nor delighted Arthur ; in the first place, he was prepared for it, in the second, he was disappointed that his favourite

little matrimonial scheme for uniting his brother and Alice Erskine was now for ever shattered.

Mr. Tubstyle, the lady's father, had given his consent, but had stipulated that the wedding was not to take place for a year. The stern parent, in this case, was a rigid Presbyterian, and had been much shocked at hearing that his intended son-in-law had a brother, who was a play-actor, and at first could not be brought to consent to his daughter connecting herself so nearly to the enemy of man, as he considered. At last, knowing that William Curzon, although by no means a rich man, was part owner of a promising and already valuable station, he thought a year's probation would be sufficient time to discover whether the young man had any of that latent devil in him which had so fatally led his brother into the paths of vice.

The summer came round, and Mr. Cuth-

bert's dramatic company, for a time, was dissolved, and Arthur was going to enjoy his annual holiday.

Alice Erskine was nearly alone in the world. Her sole relative, as far as she knew, was an old aunt who lived in a little cottage in the North of England, where she had a small property. Miss Jakes was her aunt's name. Alice's parents had died when she was quite a child, and she had been brought up entirely by her mother's maiden sister.

Miss Jakes had a comfortable income, besides the little property in the North of England, and Alice's youth and girlhood had, in truth, been a bed of roses.

The property I have spoken of, with the cottage where Alice had been brought up, was called Clarelands, and was a mile from the village of Whirling. Whirling, as many people doubtless know, is some few miles from Manchester.

Miss Jakes had always been a great lover

of the play ; her early friend had been a Miss Aurelia Beauchamp, a well-known and popular actress in the provinces. Miss Beauchamp had married an actor, by name John Colderson, who died some years before the opening of this story, and his widow was the kind and true friend of Arthur Cuthbert, to whom we were introduced during Arthur's early professional days at Birmingham.

Living near Manchester, Miss Jakes constantly indulged her passion for the drama, and Alice was often taken to Manchester to the theatre ; so it was no great wonder that the impressionable young lady conceived in early life a strong predilection for the stage. She set her mind on becoming an actress, and her indulgent aunt and guardian, who considered acting to be one of the noblest and the greatest of the arts, rather fostered the stage-craze which she discovered was taking possession of her niece. Mrs. Colderson was written to and consulted, and under her care

Alice had made her first bow before the British public. We have seen what rapid progress the young actress had made in her art.

Mrs. Colderson having failed in her appeal to Arthur on behalf of her young favourite, determined to try another plan for uniting her two pets. She wrote to her old friend, Miss Jakes, telling everything that was true about Arthur and Alice, and, I am afraid, a great deal that was not true. The result was, at the time of the opening of this chapter, Arthur had received an invitation from Miss Jakes to spend part of his holiday with her and her niece at her cottage near Whirling. Arthur very gladly accepted the invitation, and prepared to travel to Manchester. On his arrival at Clarelands he was most warmly received by Alice's hospitable aunt.

Long and happy were the strolls that Arthur and Alice daily took through the

beautiful lanes and woods around Whirling, and Miss Jakes, a few days after Arthur's arrival, wrote to Mrs. Colderson, telling her she had every hope that matters were going quite in the right direction ; and she was not very far wrong. Given a bright, handsome, clever young man, tolerably heart-whole, and a handsome, sparkling, talented young woman, intensely in love with the said young man—let them be constantly thrown together, and—well, the result may be imagined.

Arthur, during the fortnight he stayed at Clarelands, tried his utmost to persuade himself he was in love with Alice Erskine, and on several occasions he was on the point of putting the final question ; but the time went by, and he bade farewell to Miss Jakes and Alice, and left Clarelands (as Miss J. wrote to Mrs. Colderson) “ without being hooked, after all, my dear.”

Arthur passed the rest of his holiday in Paris. He took long walks, thought to him-

self, mused, and considered. Did he love Alice? Ought he to ask her to be his wife? William had evidently forgotten his old love, and so on; his holiday was over, and he had come to no conclusion. However, when he started on his tour with his old company, Alice discovered, or thought she did, some pleasant alteration in his conduct towards her; but months and months passed away and the question was never asked.

William's letters did not arrive so frequently since he was engaged to be married; Arthur received a letter from his brother every two months. In one of these epistles was a sentence which caused Arthur to change his feelings marvellously. It was a commonplace sentence enough, and ran as follows:

“ You ask me if I have ever heard anything more about that ruffian, Captain Giles, or his poor wife. I am happy to be able to tell you that the said ruffian is no more—that he died

nearly a year ago in the hospital here, from the result of his fall, which I think I described to you at the time; I should have liked to congratulate the widow upon her release, but I hear she sailed for England a long time ago."

William had no idea that what he was saying was most utterly false; he had heard of Giles's death, as he thought, upon the best authority, and believed the report to be true. He little dreamed the disastrous effects that those false tidings would bring forth in the future.

The effect was visible enough in the present. The husband dead—the widow in England. Arthur flattered himself that it was mere curiosity which made him suddenly long to discover the poor woman whose wrongs had been so faithfully described by his brother William; then he, very rightly, as he thought, had a natural desire to renew

the acquaintance of the lady whom he had delivered from the brutal ruffian who had assaulted her that day near Margate. Alice and thoughts of marriage miraculously faded from his mind, and day after day he puzzled his brains how he could discover where Mrs. Giles was living. Advertisement, if not useless, would be unwise, if not impertinent. What else could he do? He could only trust to chance.

To return to Gertrude.

After Captain Giles had left the lodgings occupied by his wife and her father, and had driven off to go on board his ship, the *Proud Janet*, the poor wife fainted away in the arms of the doctor. The next day the fever came out in earnest, and the physician shook his head, and told old Totter to prepare for the worst, for he feared his daughter could not have the strength to battle with the disease, which promised to assume a most virulent form.

Weeks and weeks passed away, and still

the doctor and his patient fought with the fever, and at length Gertrude was pronounced out of danger. It was indeed most fortunate that old Totter had so vehemently declined to return the fifty pounds, or any part of it, to Giles. Without it his daughter would probably have died in the hospital, and the old man would have ended his days in the workhouse.

Soon after Gertrude had waked up again to life, the doctor told her father, if it were possible, he must take the patient away from London to the seaside. He was a good man, this doctor, with a kind heart. He had established a sort of Convalescent Home near Brighton, where he was in the habit of sending his poor patients who required change of air after illness but were too poor to obtain it. He offered to send Gertrude to this home.

At first the old man tried to draw himself up, but poverty soon forced his pride

into his pocket, and he accepted the good doctor's generous offer.

So Gertrude and her father started for Brighton. The convalescent home was a comfortable little house standing on the Downs, about a mile out of Brighton. The home was kept by ladies—sisters of charity in every sense of the word—and Gertrude was received with all kindness. Old Totter found a humble lodging in the town, and daily hobbled out to the home to see his daughter. The patient rapidly grew strong, and was soon able to take short walks. She was anxious to be well and able to begin to work again, but the good sisters would not let her leave the home too soon.

One day she was strong enough to accompany her father to Brighton. They were walking slowly on the parade, when suddenly Gertrude gave a slight cry, and begged her father to let her sit down for awhile. She had seen enough to send the hot blood tingling

through her veins, although the cause was simple enough—only a lady and gentleman passing on horseback. Alice Erskine and Arthur Cuthbert. Gertrude quickly recovered herself, and turned to go back to the home; on her way she stopped to examine a play bill of the theatre, which was pasted to a wall; she there read:

“*Arthur Cuthbert's Dramatic Company.*”

Could it be possible, thought she, that Arthur Cuthbert and Arthur Curzon were the same? for she was not aware that Arthur had a *nom de théâtre*. How she would have liked to have spoken to him—to have seen him act. She went back to the home and thought a long time; she came to the conclusion she must neither see nor speak to him. She looked into her own heart and discovered a secret she did not dare to breathe. She packed up her things; and in spite of the remonstrances of the sisters at the home, the next morning the first train

from Brighton bore Gertrude and her father back to London.

Though not completely restored to her former strength, Gertrude set herself to her work again, for their funds were indeed very nearly exhausted. About three weeks passed away since the return of old Totter and his daughter to their lodgings in London. One morning, as Gertrude was hard at work at her sewing-machine, her father, as usual, had gone to the neighbouring public-house to read the paper and enjoy his morning beer, there was a sudden noise on the stairs outside her room ; the door was thrown open, and Totter staggered in and fell into the old arm-chair with his face full of blank horror. He held an open newspaper in his hand, and as soon as he could recover his breath sufficiently to speak, he gasped out :

“ Workhouse ! workhouse ! We are ruined — we are ruined ! My poor widowed child ! ”

“ Father ! what is it, what can you mean ? ”

replied Gertrude, hastily rising and going to him. A woman's instinct prepared her for the news he had brought.

"Read, child; read!" the old man cried querulously.

Gertrude mechanically took up the paper and read:

"Shipping disasters.—Loss of the *Proud Janet*, with all hands.

"The ship *Moses Fraser*, which arrived on the 19th inst. at San Francisco, reports that on the 2nd of last month she picked up a boat in the Pacific Ocean belonging to the barque the *Proud Janet*, bound from Newcastle (N.S.W.) to San Francisco. The appearance of the boat denoted the most terrible sufferings of the unfortunate crew. It contained the corpses of three men and the body of a lad, who was evidently at the point of death. This lad was taken on board the *Moses Fraser*, and everything was done to restore him to life. He gradually gained a

little strength, and after three days was able to speak. From all that could be gained from the poor lad, it appears that the *Proud Janet* had foundered, but the boy could not remember the date. The captain and crew took to the boats; for some days they remained in company, when gradually their provisions began to fail them. Their sufferings must have been fearful. During a gale the boats were separated, and the lad believed he saw the other boat go down. As far as could be got from the boy, the captain, Captain Giles, was in the same boat with himself, and died three days before the *Moses Fraser* came upon them. The poor boy again lost strength, and five days after he had been taken on board died."

Gertrude finished reading the paragraph, and sank in silence into a chair. The old man broke out in fresh wailings.

"Silence! dear father. Poor Captain Giles is dead; his death must have been awful.

Oh, God! what a terrible retribution! Father, think, but for a merciful dispensation of Providence I should have been with my late husband and shared his terrible death. This sad news makes us no worse off than before; let us pray that I may gain increased strength and health." And Gertrude sat silently musing.

She pictured to herself the fearful situation—the terrible dying agonies of the man who had helped to make her life such a misery; from her heart she forgave him, and felt, although he was dead, the most thorough pity for him, and horror at his awful death.

Quietly she assumed her humble widow's weeds, and went about her work as before. One day she called at the office of the owners of the *Proud Janet*, and there learned what few further particulars as to the loss of the ship they could give her.

And so months passed away.

One day a letter came for her in a hand-

writing she thought she recognized, and a thrill of fear and horror passed through her.

She opened it, and read as follows :

“ Do not fear to see my handwriting, or to know that I have found out your whereabouts. You will see nothing of me, although I shall endeavour to watch over you, unseen. In this way I may hope in time to work some reparation for the wrongs I have done you. I know that you are now a widow, and that knowledge makes my secret, self-given charge over you infinitely more precious to me. Wishing you well, most heartily,

“ RICHARD RORMAN.”

“ A greater villain than ever !” muttered Gertrude to herself. “ How could he have found me out ? Will this life of misery never end ?” and she buried her face in her hands ; but the poor thing had no tears to bring relief to her breaking heart.

After this, old Totter appeared in better health and spirits, and Gertrude discovered, to her horror and amazement, that he was gradually subsiding into his old intemperate ways, which he had, to a great extent, discontinued since her illness.

“Where can he get the money from?” she thought to herself; it was as much as she could do to obtain sufficient means to keep them both alive, in tolerable comfort. It was a problem she could not solve.

At last, one day when Totter was more sober than usual, she asked him point blank where he got the money to drink so continually. In a maudlin tone, he refused to tell her; but, on being pressed, took out two or three sovereigns from his pocket and chinked them before her face, saying:

“Your widowhood will soon be over, my dear, and I have found a new husband for you, and better than the last. See, dear, these are signs of his goodwill.”

"How dare you, father, say this to me?" Gertrude cried in great indignation. "I do not deign to ask, now, who gave you that money, but I tell you this, if you ever receive one penny more from the same source—whatever it may be, I will go away from you for ever; so beware."

At which the old man began to snivel and cry, saying, "he didn't mean any harm, and that he did all for the best."

Thus Gertrude's peace was once more threatened.

* * * * *

Bad news had arrived from New Zealand. William Curzon's year of probation had nearly passed away, when Miss Annie Tubstyle, the lady to whom he was engaged to be married, was taken ill. She recovered, but remained in such a delicate state of health that the wedding had to be indefinitely postponed.

Some months after Arthur Cuthbert's pro-

fessional visit to Brighton, during which he had been seen and recognised by Gertrude, a letter was received by him from his brother announcing the sad news of the death of Miss Annie Tubstyle. Arthur felt acutely for his brother, and wrote to him begging him to return to England for a time, hoping that the voyage and change of scene might lead his poor brother to forget some of his grief; possibly a distant hope lurked in his mind that the sight of his old and forgotten love might be of some assistance in banishing the remembrance of his sad loss. In due time an answer came, in which William declined to come home, saying his hard work on the station kept his mind, as well as his body, sufficiently employed, and that, much as he should have liked to have seen his brother again, he could not think of returning to England at present.

Months and months slipped by, and the

first year of Gertrude's widowhood had passed away.

One day the young widow called upon a certain famous actress, to try on some dress she was making for her. Gertrude was shown into the room where her employer was sitting, having finished her breakfast, chatting with a young lady who had evidently just called upon her.

"Oh dear, oh dear," cried Miss N., the actress, as Mrs. Giles entered the room, "How dreadfully punctual you are, and I'm not half ready for you. Alice dear," she continued, turning to her companion, "this is the very best and most violently punctual dress-maker in all London—Mrs. Giles."

The young lady gave a start; "Mrs. Giles!" she exclaimed; "surely it cannot be! There must be many Mrs. Gileses in the world."

"Oh, Alice Erskine," said Miss N., "I do believe one day you'll go mad on coincidences. Do you know, Mrs. Giles, I really think if I

introduced Miss Erskine to a Mrs. Smith, she would immediately imagine it must be the same Mrs. Smith who fed her with the feeding-bottle when she wore swaddling clothes !”

“Well, Miss N.,” replied Gertrude, “in this case there is something very strange, and very like a coincidence. Miss Erskine is well-known to me by name, not as an actress, but as the friend of——”

“William Curzon and his brother,” broke in Alice Erskine. “My dear Mrs. Giles, I am indeed delighted to see you. I have heard so much about you that I seem to be quite an old friend. And we may be friends, may we not ?” and the impulsive young actress embraced Gertrude.

“Now, Addy,” continued Alice, “laugh at me again about coincidences, if you like ; chance has brought me a friend I have long wished to meet.”

Of course, a long talk followed, and presently the dress, which had been almost for-

gotten, was tried on. Alice insisted on taking Gertrude home with her to her lodgings, to have a regular good chat.

"You know, my dear," she said, "I know all about you up to the death of your husband."

"Ah, you read it too?" replied Gertrude.
"You saw the account in the paper?"

"Oh dear no," returned the other, "I read all about it in a letter written by Mr. William Curzon to his brother. I did not even know it was in the papers. How very unpleasant for you."

"Unpleasant!" replied Gertrude; "that is scarcely the word for a death so terrible."

"Well," said Alice, "I suppose it must have been very dreadful, and all that—but there, it is very wrong of me to talk to you about it in this way. I will never allude to it again. I want you to tell me how you are living, and what you are doing. Good-bye, Addy dear, I'll come again soon." And off they went—Gertrude and her new friend.

Of course Gertrude and Alice were entirely at cross purposes about the death of Captain Giles, the latter having heard, and falsely, through William Curzon, that he had died in the hospital in Dunedin. The former, as we have seen, and truly, that he had died, and cruelly, in the Pacific.

The two new friends had not been long seated in Alice Erskine's pretty little sitting-room before there came a knock at the door, and Arthur Cuthbert walked into the room.

"Oh, Arthur," exclaimed Alice, "I am so glad you've come. This is —— but I see there is no need of an introduction."

Nor was there, of course; they recognised each other immediately. Fortunately, Arthur had his back to the light, or Alice's sharp eyes would have seen that his face had turned as red as poor Gertrude's.

Of course, a long talk followed this most unexpected meeting. Arthur begged to hear

all about her doings and her life, since he last had news of her from his brother.

"Miss Erskine tells me," Gertrude began, "that you heard of the awful death of my husband from your brother in New Zealand. I was in the same lodgings as I am at present—living with my poor father, when the news arrived of my husband's death. Since then——" and Gertrude gave a short account of her eventless life during the last year.

Arthur insisted upon seeing her home to her lodgings. Gertrude declined, fearing that he should see her father, who might be not exactly sober. However, it ended in his conducting her back to her home.

In a fortnight after the unexpected meeting of Gertrude and Arthur, the latter and Alice Erskine were to start upon a four months' professional tour in the provinces. You may be sure the young actor lost no time in bettering his acquaintance with the young widow. Alice—poor girl!—very quickly discovered

which way the wind blew, and knew all her hopes were dashed to the ground, and that the man she loved with her whole nature—better than anything in the world—could never be hers.

The night after her discovery of the truth she allowed herself to give way: it was passed in secret tears. She was all a woman—weak and strong. The next morning she got up ill, and unrefreshed, but with her mind firmly made up as to her future conduct.

“Good-bye, all dear hopes,” she said to herself. “Good-bye, past; good-bye, future! Farewell pleasant dreams and glorious air-castles! I am not the first woman who has passed through life pleasantly and happily, with never a heart to throb beneath her empty bosom. But they shall be happy, though. Gertrude shall be here every day till we start on the tour. I will contrive to leave them constantly alone together; and then, as

old Master Walter says in the ‘Hunchback,’

‘Now, if they find not out how beat their hearts,
I have no skill, not I, in feeling pulses.’

And when we are in the provinces, I’ll take good care he doesn’t forget her. And, at the end of the summer, they shall be married—married! and I? Well, well! ‘On with the mask again!’”

At this moment, Arthur entered the room.

“Good-morning, Arthur,” she cried. “How late you are.”

“Why are you not ready?” Arthur asked. “I promised to take you for a drive this morning. It’s a lovely day for it.”

“I don’t feel up to it this morning, Arthur; and, besides, I want to see Gertrude. I wish you would go round to her lodgings and bring her. Tell her to bring some work, and I’ll help her.”

Arthur did not want much pressing; and, without even noticing how true might be the first part of Alice’s excuse, which her pale,

worn face might have told him, quickly started off for Gertrude's lodgings.

The fortnight passed away only too quickly : oh, how happy Gertrude was ! How true an instinct has love ! No word had passed, yet they knew well that each was dearer to the other than all else in the world.

Old Totter soon discovered how matters stood, and tried his utmost to keep sober. Before the fortnight was over, the old man scrawled a few lines to a certain friend of his, as follows :

“ It's no go, Dick. You must give it up. She'll never do it, and there's someone else in the field. So good-bye, and thank you.”

Alice and Arthur commenced their tour. Whenever they happened to be acting in any place within a few hours' run of London, Arthur came up to town to spend Sunday with Gertrude and her father.

Three months of the tour had passed away,

and one Monday Arthur arrived from London, and announced to Alice the by no means unexpected news that he had been accepted by Mrs. Giles.

The day following the one of happy memory, when she had, in love's glorious intoxication, whispered "Yes," Gertrude received a letter from Richard Rorman. His handwriting had no terrors for her now—now she had a protector. Besides, her new love had brought her new strength—new life. She opened it; it ran as follows :

"GERTRUDE,

"I cannot live without you ! I hear from your father you are thinking of becoming a second time a wife. Gertrude, *I must be your husband!* I am changed entirely. I returned from New Zealand after I last saw you, when I was mad with my love for you, with what I may call a fair fortune. I can keep you and your father in comfort; only let me love

you—I ask for nothing more. If you refuse me, you will drive me mad again, and God knows what I shall do, or what will become of me or you. You mustn't—you daren't—refuse me. If you do, I will hound you to your death—I will persecute you till I have to swing for it! I will live for nothing else than to make your life as great a misery as, by refusing me, you will make mine—so beware.”

Gertrude took a sheet of paper and envelope, and wrote as follows :

“ You seem to forget, Dick Rorman, that we are no longer in the backwoods of a colony. Here, at least, is protection for the weak, even if it were needed, from cowardly braggarts ; I have no fear of you now ; and, as for persecution in the future, begin as soon as you please. A letter will find you if sent to the address you have given me ; but it will, I know, be a greater difficulty to discover you.

So begin, that I may put the eye of law upon you. Would your past life stand it, Dick Rorman?"

She addressed the envelope to

"MR. RORMAN,

"Care of Mr. Wills,

"The Wheatsheaf,

"Spitalfields."

The end of summer came.

One bright day in August, a merry little party assembled before the altar of St. Margaret's church, Westminster.

The bride was a widow—Mrs. Gertrude Giles. The bridegroom, Arthur Curzon—known upon the provincial stage as Arthur Cuthbert. The bridesmaid Miss Alice Erskine, the favourite actress; the best man a friend of the bridegroom—the "juvenile man" of the "Cuthbert Comedy Company," Mr. Joseph Tarne. The bride's father, a crippled old gentleman, and in appearance the least re-

spectable individual of the party, gave the bride away.

A handsome matron—Mrs. Colderson, the favourite actress of “old women” parts—chaperoned the party.

The wedding over, the little company assembled at Mrs. Colderson’s lodgings, where breakfast was served. After a merry meal, the bride and bridegroom, amid showers of rice and a few old slippers, drove off *en route* for Paris.

Totter and young Tarne returned to the breakfast-room to drink one more glass of champagne; Mrs. Colderson and Alice Erskine retired to another room, where Alice fell upon the neck of her old friend and—but on this scene we will draw a veil.

Need I try to describe Gertrude’s feelings? Did she think of the contrast between the two weddings? Was she utterly content and happy?

Content? Is there such a word in the

world's vocabulary? Gertrude thought so.

Happy? How long had the poor barque been tempest-tossed! How often nearly wrecked! The compass broken, the very sails blown away: would the timbers hold together till the port was in sight? The voyage, long and disastrous, was at an end at last; the haven was reached, and she was at rest—at rest.

END OF VOL. I.



